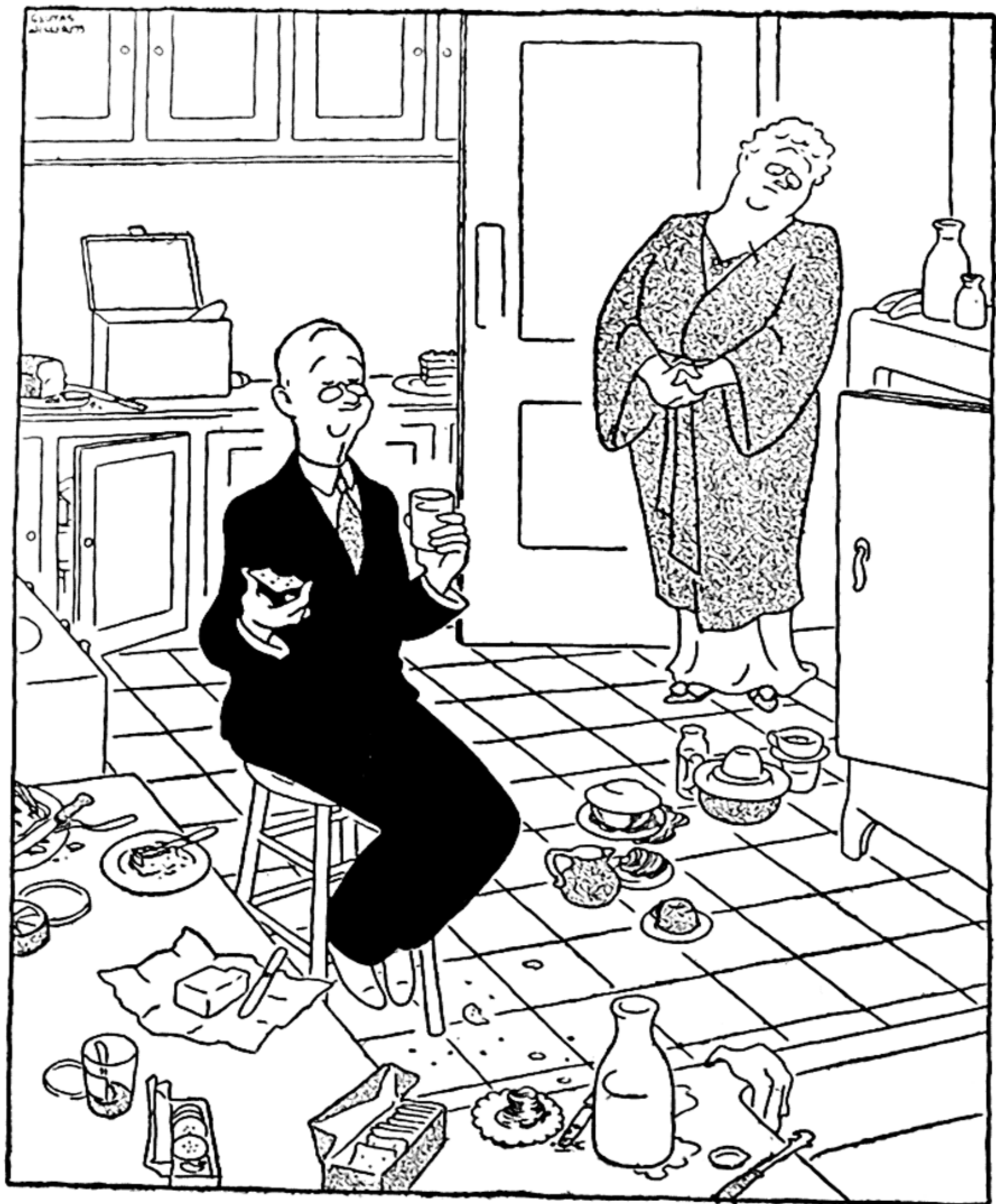


LIFE AND LITERATURE
IN THE UNITED STATES



MODERN AMERICAN HUMOUR



Gluyas Williams

New Yorker

THE INNER MAN
Bedtime Snack

MODERN AMERICAN HUMOUR

*An Anthology
selected by*

MICHAEL BARSLEY

LONDON
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INTRODUCTION, PLEASE!

There is a popular American broadcast programme (the equivalent of our Brains Trust) called *Information, Please!* I am reminded of it because I want to provide information in my introduction. There is only one thing more difficult than compiling an anthology and that is writing an introduction to it.

In choosing the contents, one is bound to tread on some toes and commit the sin of omission. But in prefacing the selection at any length, one is in danger of crowding out the reader's favourite humorist with one's own unnecessary remarks. But this introduction is not, I hope, unnecessary. The plain fact is that we do not know as much about American humour in *literature* as we might. Every week millions of us laugh at Hollywood films. But what amuses us on the screen is just as funny in print, and more enduring. I have here tried to present, for a somewhat wider public than usual, American humour in all its very considerable variety.

Moreover, a piecemeal and entirely modern appreciation overlooks one point, that a vigorous, recognizable American tradition has led up to the particular piece which we find so amusing. There is nothing duller than outmoded humour, and the raw Yankee fun of the nineteenth century is not now widely read in England even by people over sixty. But if we expect Americans to know about Dickens and to understand why his humour is peculiarly English, they have a right to ask us how we figure out on Washington Irving, Samuel Clemens and O. Henry. That is why this introduction begins with Rip Van Winkle and doesn't stop till it has covered the Debunkers, and the engaging lunatics of Broadway. The story of American humour is the story of many diverse minds and dialects, which differ more than we over here may realize, if we only judge them by what we see at the cinema.

Let me first give an idea of the range of this book.

I began with one of Edward Streeter's *Love Letters of a Rookie to His Girl* (1918) and ended with a poem of this war, echoing just that unwilling realization of goodbye-to-all-that which we ourselves felt during those gentle sunny days of September, over three years ago.

Between the two war book-ends there is a wide choice. Sinclair Lewis's figure of Babbitt will revive memories. Clarence Day's Victorian father will not be a stranger to many, and he received one of the first invitations to be present. I have selected several authors whose work is full of verbal tricks—I am thinking particularly of Don Marquis's *Archy and Mehitabel*, Frank Sullivan's *Cliché Expert*, and the poems by Ogden Nash—and one or two more whose writing is quite straightforward. In most cases I have tried to choose something with a different American background, and here you have American Negro humour (Roark Bradford's *Adulteration of Old King David*), the Jewish East-side dialect (a *Nize Baby* fable by Milt Gross), immigrant humour (Leonard Q. Ross's heroic Hyman Kaplan), the underworld, or "hardened artery" of Broadway (a *More Than Somewhat* story by Damon Runyon), and a hilarious take-off on America's radio serial-dramas (Frank Sullivan's *The Jukes Family*). James Thurber explains himself—or at least he tries to. This diffident and persistently melancholy writer and artist is a particular favourite of mine, although I am unaware that he may only do it to annoy because he knows it teases. But Thurber must be read and observed, just as the Marx Brothers must be seen, whatever you think of the experience afterwards.

You may also take mild exception to Margaret Halsey's account of an English party which, as far as she was concerned, never got going. On second thoughts, you'll admit that you have been to such parties—before the war. The British are much less insular now and a good deal more used to people of other countries.

The distaff side of this book is a strong one. Dorothy Parker

INTRODUCTION PLEASE!

contributes her own special brand of satire, sparkling and very dry, and a poetess new to this country, Phyllis McGinley, writes charmingly about the American summer. Add Alexander Woollcott coming to dinner with an essay on Kathleen Norris, Ludwig Bemelmans discoursing on head waiters, an expert conversation-piece by Ring Lardner, and a glimpse of Robert Benchley struggling with French newspapers in the days when visitors to Paris were not all square-headed louts with superb cameras—and whom have I offended except those who think Stephen Leacock is an American?

This is the opportunity many anthology readers wait for. Indeed, it's part of the fun readers get out of anthologies, to balance their taste with the compiler's, and find the missing authors. But each of these humorists has a particular American flavour, mint julep or rye high or plain coca-cola. Some of the authors omitted have great popularity, but theirs is a universal rather than an American appeal. If all the world were paper, I could have taken the field with one of the most brilliant sides ever contained between covers. As it is, I think the anthology is representative even if it isn't complete.

How did American humour reach its present position? In the next few pages I have very briefly sketched in the background.

SLEEPY HOLLOW TO SLEEPLESS HOLLYWOOD

Come back for a moment to the year of Waterloo. In the same year Washington Irving sailed for Liverpool. It was not the triumphal visit of an established author, come to arrange a technicolour version of Rip Van Winkle for the British. At that time Irving had not even thought of writing for a living, and when he was eventually forced to, he had no illusions about his chances. "I was deterred", he says, "by the severity with which American productions had been treated by the British press."

That is how Anglo-American literary relations stood. The success of Washington Irving as an author is important, because apart from Benjamin Franklin, he was the first American writer to win a reputation outside his own country. The story of Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, which are considered as typically American, were written in England. Washington Irving employed a style as polished as Goldsmith's or Addison's—an English style, not an American one. He loved the Old World. He was the friend of Scott and Byron, and contemporary gossip-writers named him as one of the suitors of Mary Shelley.

It is longer than a Rip Van Winkledoze from Sleepy Hollow to Sleepless Hollywood, but if a short account of American humour is to begin anywhere, it should be when this New York lawyer booked his passage for England.

AMERICAN DIALECT HUMOUR

If you have nothing better to do than run through the files of *Punch* for 1863 or so, you will find some of the letters of one Artemus Ward, respectfully addressed to Mr. Punch. They were the work of Charles Farrer Brown, and his deliberate mis-spellings and illiterate style, his backwoods philosophizing and adventures of itinerant Yankee showmen went to the heads of *Punch* readers.

It is the lure of "illiterature", the "speshul" appeal, the writing on public walls, the housemaid's comic letters to prospective employers. Artemus Ward rambled on like this:

"My naburs is mourn half crazy on the new fangled idear about sperrets. Sperretoul circles is held nitely and 4 or 5 long hared fellers has settled here and gone into the sperret biznis excloosively."

The *Punch* public, then, as now, largely middle-class,

rather enjoyed looking down on the illiterates, and the fact that dialect humour came from the United States seemed appropriate. But the real objection to Artemus Ward is that the mistakes in grammar and spelling are not really authentic. If you *speak* the above passage it sounds reasonable, and the sort of man who would make all these mistakes would scarcely ever write at all. As Bernard Shaw has pointed out, it is almost impossible to represent local dialect in writing.

BRET HARTE

Bret Harte was another backwoods philosopher. I am myself suspicious of those little accidents which produce a first-rate literary reputation, but Bret Harte's seems to be a well authenticated case. He was editor of a west coast paper, the *Overland Monthly*. On one occasion he had trouble with the paper's make-up. A page had to be filled in. Editor Harte turned up a little thing he had written for his own amusement, *Plain Language From Truthful James*, a burlesque poem about the Heathen Chinees, which at once became and has long remained *the* poem about the Heathen Chinees. How different he is, by the way, from the heroes of modern China!

Which I wish to remark—
 And my language is plain—
 That for ways that are dark,
 And for tricks that are vain,
 The heathen Chinees is peculiar,
 Which the same I would rise to explain.

Within a short time the author was being paid ten thousand dollars a year (and Ten Grand in those days would have kept a war effort going for more than thirty seconds) to write about the Roaring Camp country. When Bret Harte visited this country he brought a machine-turned reputation with him

and proceeded to exploit it for the benefit of the delighted British public. For the first time the name "California" began to dazzle us, the California of hard-riding Broncho Bills and miners. Perhaps you prefer the peaches and the fruit-juice and the bathing girls of—well, it's yesterday, for us.

"INSEPARABLE MY NOSE AND THUMB!"

The line is Dorothy Parker's, but it might well have been Mark Twain's. What Washington Irving admired, the solemn temples, the gorgeous palaces, Samuel Clemens derided, and this attitude, which Mark Van Doren calls "grinning at all big things and grimacing in the presence of grandeur", has remained typically American to this day. It is the attitude of Babbitt and the anti-intellectual, college-campus films. It is also reflected by the Lancashire man returning from the Alps and saying "Eh, they're nowt but great loomps".

The Innocent when abroad compared the Sea of Galilee with Lake Tahoe 'way back home and preferred the local scenery. The Connecticut Yankee went to the court of King Arthur as a republican, a modernist and a democrat. Mark Twain implied that the Innocent wasn't so dumb. Half a century has produced many an American imitator and admirer of his bluff, raw provincial style and outlook, but there has also grown up an opposing school, deeply and sometimes quite pointlessly attracted by the riches of Europe's past. At its best it is the American private art collection and symphony orchestra: at its worst it is the fatuous millionaire transplanting a feudal castle stone by stone in *The Ghost Goes West*, and filling the moat with Venetian gondolas.

The English know quite a lot about Mark Twain, even if his fervent supporters are dying out and his books, their yellow pages splitting, stand unnoticed in the twopenny shelf in Charing Cross Road. We believe—and we are right—that *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are his greatest achievements, and we are prepared to leave it at that. Americans have

passed beyond that stage and seem to be more engrossed in Samuel Clemens himself than in what he wrote. For some reason people like their humorists to be unhappy in their private lives. My enjoyment of James Thurber is deepened by his assertion that "the damp hand of melancholy" has set his characters in their uneasy motion. Psychological difficulties, an unwise marriage between a laughing schoolboy and a high-society wife—American critics of Mark Twain have found all this, and a mother-complex too. I think it is unlikely that the controversy will reach these shores. We have our native humorists to worry over. We have been wondering how to explain away P. G. Wodehouse.

THE FIRST FOUR MILLION

American writing is remarkable for the Tall Story: also for the Short Story. "O. Henry" (William Sidney Porter) comes too early for the present collection, but few modern short-story writers have escaped his influence or exceeded his output. He wrote such technically flawless tales, and so many of them that years after his death stray stories by O. Henry were still being garnered into volumes by an understandably delighted publisher.

This former drugstore assistant only turned to writing after his uneventful life had been marked by a flight to Honduras, to escape a charge of embezzlement, and a subsequent term in prison. But the majority of his stories deal with the hum-drum lives of ordinary Americans, particularly the four million inhabitants of New York City. Here are the shopkeepers, the office boys, the managers—and the prototypists of Ginger Rogers. O. Henry considered the Four Million had been neglected by writers. At any rate scenario-writers have now made up the deficiency. What more popular example of modern American comedy is there than the she-married-her-boss story?

At this stage in the history of American humour, the slang

terms rain down thick and fast. George Ade, author of *Fables in Slang*, used rich and strange words like gazimbat, mazuma, swell joint, flim flams, and phrases like "bombarding the innards with Aqua Fortis". It is hard luck on such writers that slang, in the same way as jazz and *haute couture*, doesn't last and isn't meant to. The errand boy who used to shout "Sez you!" now retorts "So what?" and its successor is already on the lips of men of the A.E.F. as they cross the Atlantic from the land of Idiom's Delight.

THE JAZZ AGE

Much has been written about civilization-on-the-downward-beat, or The Age of Jazz. Perhaps too much. The tinsel has long been tarnished. We all know how a Europe exhausted by a Great War turned to the United States greedily in search of amusement, and how Broadway supplied all that was wanted—flappers, cocktails, jazz, gangsters and slangsters. In England, to talk Yankee was smart and modern, a fresh idiom for jaded people. I venture to prophesy that the same thing will not happen after this war. We already have a better understanding of our cousins across the Atlantic, and in time we shall be able to visit them over a long week-end.

There can be no doubt of the Jazz Age's decadence. Its mood of hectic disillusion is perfectly portrayed by the American writer Scott Fitzgerald. Already his novels are period pieces, but in the Twenties they represented an actual existence. In his book *The Great Gatsby* a millionaire throws enormous parties, financed by bootlegging, and lives with a perpetual background of sex and suicide and scraps of extremist philosophy. One sentence is enough to suggest the mood.

"All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the Beale Street Blues, while a hundred pairs of gold and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust."

But if part of America lived in this atmosphere of sentimental disenchantment, there was a group of writers who rebelled against it. They armed themselves with the right weapon, ridicule, or as the Americans call it, debunking.

THE NOT-SO-GENTLE ART OF DEBUNKING

Unless we understand the deep-rooted American desire to "debunk" we shall continually miss the point of American humour. To debunk is roughly to knock the stuffing out of things which are supposedly full of sawdust. Mark Twain grimaced in the presence of grandeur. Henry Ford said History itself was bunk—conveniently forgetting that he is part of to-day's history. H. L. Mencken, founder and editor of the *American Mercury*, decided that not only the jazz-ridden neurotics but also the gauche American bourgeoisie and the elegant European aristocrats had more than their quota of sawdust, and he went in for debunking on the grand scale.

Mencken's *Prejudices* fill out into six volumes, roughly covering the Twenties. He and his friends coined the pleasant title of "the Booboisie" to indicate the class of people they were attacking. The phrase haunted them. Sitting round the fire they produced a whole set of the same coinage—Boobarian, Booberati, Homo Boobiens—and then set out in full cry for the attack. If it were not so difficult to separate Mencken's humour from his irascible hostility, I would like to have included him among my American humorists. He is master of the flashing phrase. Years ago I set down on my tables his remark about a certain type of smart female who was "not so much woman clothed as clothing womaned". In fact, to read H. L. Mencken aloud on Women is one of the best ways of warming up to an argument with your wife, if you feel the need for one coming on.

BABBITT AND BIG BUSINESS

One of the writers to come under Mencken's influence was a journalist from Minnesota, Sinclair Lewis. He is not primarily a humorist, but his satire on middle class, Middle West American life in the immortal *Babbitt* is debunking at its keenest and most joyous, and I cannot resist bringing out a chapter from it for your delight. Moreover, the life portrayed in *Babbitt* is not entirely a thing of the past. The blend of Boost and Bunk was less violent in the 1930's, after the Great Crash of '29, but it still persisted. And if we still have our Blimperry and Bumbledom in England, the red-tape men who do not understand the meaning of Total War, I am willing to wager that the U.S.A. has not lost all its Babbitttry.

"George F. Babbitt made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay."

Big Business influenced all forms of art and literature and drama. It thrived on the comparatively new technique of advertising, the implications of which for mankind are almost as prodigious as those of the cinema. In the U.S.A. it monopolized the radio, until car manufacturers could offer you the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and makers of cereal foods could present anyone from Eddie Cantor to the Metropolitan Opera Star. As we have seen, when these forms of publicity and propaganda get into the hands of embittered Nazis they can enslave a continent.

THE MOVIE FINGER WRITES . . .

Meanwhile Hollywood offered, and still offers, even more alluring prospects to writers than the advertising managers

and radio producers. This staggering major industry exported its wares impartially, everywhere from China to Peru, until men of primitive tribes, who had scarcely ever seen a Bible, had enjoyed Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, and the rest. Broad comedy became more sophisticated: no longer did it mean only the Keystone Cops, Fatty Arbuckle and the uncorseted and friendly busts of Mack Sennett's bathing beauties. There came the opportunity for self-respecting American humorists to sell their efforts for a bigger fee than any publisher could put up.

Anita Loos was one of the first established authors to write for the screen. But how the list has lengthened! Of the authors in this anthology alone, Damon Runyon, Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Alexander Woolcott, Sinclair Lewis, and even James Thurber have been connected with the cinema as writers or actors.

I have filled in the background of the modern American humorist in some detail, because it affects his type of humour. Some of the humorists are unconcerned with this huge, cocksure, gadget-fancying, money-making civilization. Others rebel against it, but since it is so vast a thing, they have become curiously wan and defeatist. As James Thurber points out, humorists of his sort have a genius for getting into minor difficulties. They are, like Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*, baffled and caught up with the machinery of mere living.

That is precisely what I find so endearing about them. Theirs is the humour, rather more subtly prepared, of the *Three Men in a Boat* variety, full of encounters with life's obstinate tin-openers. Such humour gives us a fellow feeling: that is its great comfort. The seas divide, thousands of miles of them, but we are at one with these gently fumbling, unambitious American creatures for whom modern existence offers the same little worries we meet ourselves, every time something gets broken in the house or an Official Form arrives, stiff with threats and cross references.

THE ARTISTS

American illustrated humour takes roughly four different forms. The funny picture (a bad description, but the whole species is difficult to define in a phrase), the political cartoon, the animated cartoon and the strip cartoon. They range from highbrow magazine sketches to the tabloid newspaper strip cartoons which make no demands whatever on the intelligence. The fantastic popularity of strip cartoons, a very old idea brought up to date, is one of the phenomena of the U.S.A. It is a gigantic industry.

Pat Sullivan's "Felix the Cat" began the animated cartoon boom, but in the hands of Walt Disney it has become a thrilling and often beautiful combination of three art forms—drama, painting and music—with limitless possibilities. Disney's creations, Mickey, Pluto, Donald Duck, the Big Bad Wolf and Three Little Pigs will become the accepted nursery-rhyme figures of the future. They are already world-famous. On the Continent, when the Continent still laughed, Mickey Mouse was Topolino. When Disney created his "Band Concert", e'en the ranks of Toscanini could scarce forebear to cheer.

Political cartoonists are numerous, as you would expect in an alert democracy. The current favourite is probably Fitzpatrick, the equivalent of our David Low. Peter Arno is a good example of an artist whose satire is often political. Among American humorous illustrators Thurber enjoys a great reputation in his own rather cramped niche. More easy to appreciate is an artist like Helen Hokinson, who specializes in suburban ladies with middle-class troubles and middle-aged spreads. Otto Soglow, creator of the Little King, gets a maximum of meaning out of a minimum of line. Whitney Darrow, Gluyas Williams, Barlow, and George Price are all artists who have helped to keep the *New Yorker* at the height of her gay and irresponsible fashion, a fashion which has something of pre-war Paris about it.

THOSE AMERICAN MAGAZINES

The history of American magazines is interesting. Some of them are older than you think. *The Saturday Evening Post* used to announce on the cover that it was founded by Benjamin Franklin. (Actually, it seems to have been produced from the office of Franklin's paper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*.) The American *Vanity Fairs* began in the 'sixties, one containing many of the Artemus Ward letters. *Life*, *Judge*, and *Collier's* followed in the eighties'. The *Life* which we now occasionally see, brilliantly photographing death, ran for a long time as a humorous paper, the rival of *Judge*. The sweet smile of the Gibson Girl on its cover, and Robert Sherwood's editing, kept it going until the 1930's, by which time the precocious *New Yorker* had it worried and waning and soon to be bought up by Time, Inc.

The *New Yorker* has, in a remarkably short space of time, won an enviable reputation for an elegant and witty style and for its ability to pick out first-rate humour whether in prose, verse or illustration. It has no parallel in English magazine publishing, and an attempt to imitate it over here had little success, just as the Americans could never produce a transatlantic equivalent of *Punch*. But there is no doubt that the *New Yorker* type of writing and drawing has influenced English humorists. It is crisp and subtle, never obvious or laboured. The one-line caption for cartoons is one of its distinctions. The blend of satire, *rapprochement* and sentiment is another. Some object to the style being a little mannered and over-sophisticated, but that is a matter of opinion. Many of the authors in this anthology first enjoyed fame as contributors to the *New Yorker*: Woolcott, Benchley, Thurber, Parker, Nash, Ross, Sullivan, McGinley, to list them briefly.

We can now look at our present company in proper perspective. Behind them lies the provincial dialect of cowboy philosophers, the rude laughter of the ex-Mississippi pilot

turned author, the disenchantment of the Jazz Age, the worship of the Great God Bunk, the devilish Debunkers, the ever more widely embracing arms of commercialism and the consequent lure of the Ivory Tower. Ahead of them looms the end of the Foolish Things and the already recognizable outline of war. How excellent to find that their humour is gay, quick-witted, deft of style, and rich in phrase! In these days of war we are not surprised to hear the doughboys wisecracking at us from their open jeeps in the London streets. They are indeed a people with a great sense of fun and friendliness.

M.B.

EDWARD STREETER

This journalist's reputation rests mainly on the Love Letters from a Rookie to his Girl. These DERE MABLE books, which began to appear at the end of the Great War, were immediately popular, by reason of the mis-spellings as well as the situations. The Rookie of to-day would doubtless avoid Bill's mistakes in the language, if not in the routine. Edward Streeter has also written DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAYS, the record of an American who always catches the 8.15 to town.

LOVE LETTER FROM A ROOKIE

Dere Mable:

Having nothin better to do I take up my pen to rite.

We have been here now three weeks. As far as I am concerned I am all ready to go. I told the Captin that I was ready any time. He said yes, but that wed have to wait for the slow ones cause they was all goin together. I says was I to go out to drill with the rest. He said yes more for the example than anything else. Its kind of maddening to be hangin round here when I might be over there helpin the Sammies put a stop to this thing.

In the mean time I been doin guard duty. Seems like I been doin it every night but I know what there up against and I dont say nothin. Guard duty is something like extemperaneus speakin. You got to know everything your goin to say before you start. Its very tecknickle. For instance you walk a post but there aint no post. An you mount guard but you dont really mount nothin. An you turn out the guard but you dont really turn em out. They come out them selves. Just the other night I was walkin along thinkin of you Mable an my feet which was hurtin. It made me awful lonesome. An officer come up and he says why dont you draw your pistol when you here someone comin. An I says I dont wait till the sheep is stole I drew it this afternoon from the Supply sargent. An I showed it to him tucked inside my shirt where noone could get it away from me without some tussel, you bet, Mable. But it seems that you got to keep on drawin it all the time. Then later I here footsteps. I was expectin the relief so I was right on the job. An a man come up and I poked my pistol right in his face and says Halt. Who goes there? And he says Officer of the day. An bein disappointed as who wouldnt be I says Oh hell I thought it was the relief. And he objected to that. The relief, Mable—but whats the use you wouldn't understand it.

Theres some mistake up north Mable about the way were built, Mable. Its kind of depresin to think that you could forget about us so quick. Everyones gettin sweters without sleeves and gloves without fingers. We still got everything we started with Mable. Why not sox without feet and pants without legs. If your makin these things for after the war I think your anticipatin a little. Besides its depresin for the fellos to be reminded all the time. Its like givin a fello a life membership to the Old Soldiers home to cheer him up when he sails. I was sayin the other day that if the fellos at Washington ever get onto this they'll be issuin soleles shoes and shirtles sleeves.

Its gettin awful cold. No wonder this is a healthy place. All the germs is froze. I guess there idea of the hardenin proces is to freeze a fello stiff. The Captin said the other day we was gettin in tents of trainin. Thats all right but Id kind of like to see those steam heated barraks. Youve red about those fellos that go swimmin in the ice in winter. I guess thed like our shouer baths. They say Cleanliness is next to Godliness, Mable. I say its next to impossible.

I started this letter almost a weak ago. I just found it in my bakin can. They call it a bakin can but its too small to bake nothin. I keep my soap in it. I got some news for you. The regiment is to be dismantled. The Captin called me over this mornin and asked me where Id like to be transferred. I said home if it was the same to him. So there goin to send me to the artillery. This is a very dangerous and useful limb of the servus Mable. I dont kno my address. Just write me care of the General.

I got the red muffler that your mother sent me. Give her my love just the same.

yours relentlessly,

Bill.

RING LARDNER

(1885-1933)

Like Damon Runyon, Ringold Lardner began his career as a sports writer and columnist before turning to short stories. "In his grotesque but searching tales of baseball players, pugilists, movie queens, song-writers and other such dismal persons", writes H. L. Mencken, "he set down common American with the utmost precision, and yet with enough imagination to make his work a contribution of genuine and permanent value to the literature." Quite a glowing tribute to the local sports reporter's achievement.

Ring Lardner's first book, YOU KNOW ME, AL, tales about a baseball team, appeared in 1915. His HOW TO WRITE SHORT STORIES (1924) exploits the vernacular even further, with every story a sardonic take-off not only on the style but on the character of Americans the author didn't like. Later he debunked the song-writers of Tin Pan Alley in a play written in collaboration with George Kaufman, and yet provided material for the writers of such songs, and captions for comic strips.

The more Ring Lardner discovered about people, the more depressed he seemed to get and the more he concentrated on the shallow and vicious side of their character. He could not remain, like O. Henry, a disinterested chronicler of the life and speech around him.

ON CONVERSATION

The other night I happened to be coming back from Wilmington, Del. to wherever I was going and was sitting in the smoking compartment or whatever they now call the wash room and overheard a conversation between two fellows who we will call Mr. Butler and Mr. Hawkes. Both of them seemed to be from the same town and I only wished I could repeat the conversation verbatim but the best I can do is report it from memory. The fellows evidently had not met for some three to fifteen years as the judges say.

"Well", said Mr. Hawkes, "if this isn't Dick Butler!"

"Well", said Mr. Butler, "if it isn't Dale Hawkes."

"Well, Dick", said Hawkes, "I never expected to meet you on this train."

"No", replied Butler. "I genally always take Number 28. I just took this train this evening because I had to be in Wilmington today."

"Where are you headed for?" asked Hawkes.

"Well, I am going to the big town", said Butler.

"So am I, and I am certainly glad we happened to be in the same car."

"I am glad too, but it is funny we happened to be in the same car."

It seemed funny to both of them but they successfully concealed it so far as facial expression was concerned. After a pause Hawkes spoke again:

"How long since you been back in Lansing?"

"Me?" replied Butler. "I ain't been back there for twelve years."

"I ain't been back there either myself for ten years. How long since you been back there?"

"I ain't been back there for twelve years."

"I ain't been back there myself for ten years, Where are you headed for?"

"New York", replied Butler. "I have got to get there about once a year. Where are you going?"

"Me?" asked Hawkes. "I am going to New York too. I have got to go down there every little while for the firm."

"Do you have to go there very often?"

"Me? Every little while. How often do you have to go there?"

"About once a year. How often do you get back to Lansing?"

"Last time I was there was ten years ago. How long since you was back?"

"About twelve years ago. Lot of changes there since we left there."

"That's the way I figured it. It makes a man seem kind of old to go back there and not see nobody you know."

"You said something. I go along the streets there now and don't see nobody I know."

"How long since you was there?"

"Me?" said Hawkes. "I only get back there about once every ten years. By the way what became of old man Kelsey?"

"Who do you mean, Kelsey?"

"Yes, what become of him?"

"Old Kelsey? Why he has been dead for ten years."

"Oh, I didn't know that. And what become of his daughter? I mean Eleanor."

"Why Eleanor married a man named Forster or Jennings or something like that from Flint."

"Yes, but I mean the other daughter, Louise."

"Oh, she's married."

"Where are you going now?"

"I am headed for New York on business for the firm."

"I have to go there about once a year myself—for the firm"

"Do you get back to Lansing very often?"

"About once in ten or twelve years. I hardly know anybody there now. It seems funny to go down the street and not know nobody."

"That's the way I always feel. It seems like it was not my

old home town at all. I go up and down the street and don't know anybody and nobody speaks to you. I guess I know more people in New York now than I do in Lansing."

"Do you get to New York often?"

"Only about once a year. I have to go there for the firm."

"New York isn't the same town it used to be neither."

"No, it is changing all the time. Just like Lansing. I guess they all change."

"I don't know much about Lansing any more. I only get there about once in ten or twelve years."

"What are you reading there?"

"Oh, it is just a little article in *Asia*. They's a good many interesting articles in *Asia*."

"I only seen a couple of it. This thing I am reading is a little article on 'Application' in the *American*."

"Well, go ahead and read and don't let me disturb you."

"Well, I just wanted to finish it up. Go ahead and finish what you're reading yourself."

"All right. We will talk things over later. It is funny we happened to get on the same car."

—First to Last

SINCLAIR LEWIS

The following description, which I have called "Life in Zenith", forms Chapter 8 of Sinclair Lewis's BABBITT. The chapter is printed exactly as it appears in the original. When BABBITT was first published in this country (1922) a long glossary of American terms accompanied the book. Such a precaution is quite unnecessary to-day!

LIFE IN ZENITH

I

He solemnly finished the last copy of the *American Magazine*, while his wife sighed, laid away her darning, and looked enviously at the lingerie designs in a women's magazine. The room was very still.

It was a room which observed the best Floral Heights standards. The grey walls were divided into artificial panelling by strips of white-enamelled pine. From the Babbitts' former house had come two much-carved rocking-chairs, but the other chairs were new, very deep and restful, upholstered in blue and gold-striped velvet. A blue velvet sofa faced the fireplace, and behind it was a cherrywood table and a tall piano-lamp with a shade of golden silk. (Two out of every three houses in Floral Heights had before the fireplace a sofa, a mahogany table real or imitation, and a piano-lamp or a reading-lamp with a shade of yellow or rose silk.)

On the table was a runner of gold-threaded Chinese fabric, four magazines, a silver box containing cigarette-crumbs, and three "gift-books"—large expensive editions of fairy-tales illustrated by English artists and as yet unread by any Babbitt save Tinka.

In a corner by the front windows was a large cabinet gramophone. (Eight out of every nine Floral Heights houses had one.)

Among the pictures, hung in the exact centre of each grey panel, were a red and black imitation English hunting-print, an anæmic imitation boudoir-print with a French caption of whose morality Babbitt had always been rather suspicious, and a "hand-coloured" photograph of a Colonial room—rag rug, maiden spinning, cat demure before a white fireplace. (Nineteen out of every twenty houses in Floral Heights had

either a hunting-print, a *Madame Fait sa Toilette* print, a coloured photograph of a New England house, a photograph of a Rocky Mountain, or all four.)

It was a room as superior in comfort to the "parlour" of Babbitt's boyhood as his motor was superior to his father's buggy. Though there was nothing in the room that was interesting, there was nothing that was offensive. It was as neat, and as negative, as a block of artificial ice. The fireplace was unsoftened by downy ashes or by sooty brick; the brass fire-irons were of immaculate polish; and the grenadier and irons were like samples in a shop, desolate, unwanted, lifeless things of commerce.

Against the wall was a piano, with another piano-lamp, but no one used it save Tinka. The hard briskness of the gramophone contented them; their store of jazz records made them feel wealthy and cultured; and all they knew of creating music was the nice adjustment of a bamboo needle. The books on the table were unspotted and laid in rigid parallels; not one corner of the carpet-rug was curled; and nowhere was there a hockey-stick, a torn picture-book, an old cap, or a gregarious and disorganizing dog.

II

At home, Babbitt never read with absorption. He was concentrated enough at the office, but here he crossed his legs and fidgeted. When his story was interesting he read the best, that is the funniest, paragraphs to his wife; when it did not hold him he coughed, scratched his ankles and his right ear, thrust his left thumb into his vest pocket, jingled his silver, whirled the cigar-cutter and the keys on one end of his watch-chain, yawned, rubbed his nose, and found errands to do. He went upstairs to put on his slippers—his elegant slippers of seal-brown, shaped like mediæval shoes. He brought up an apple from the barrel which stood by the trunk-closet in the basement.

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away", he enlightened Mrs. Babbitt, for quite the first time in fourteen hours.

"That's so."

"An apple is Nature's best regulator."

"Yes, it——"

"Trouble with women is, they never have sense enough to form regular habits."

"Well, I——"

"Always nibbling and eating between meals."

"George!" She looked up from her reading. "Did you have a light lunch to-day, like you were going to? I did!"

This malicious and unprovoked attack astounded him. "Well, maybe it wasn't as light as—— Went to lunch with Paul and didn't have much chance to diet. Oh, you needn't to grin like a chessy cat! If it wasn't for me watching out and keeping an eye on our diet—— I'm the only member of this family that appreciates the value of oatmeal for breakfast. I——"

She stooped over her story while he piously sliced and gulped down the apple, discoursing:

"One thing I've done: cut down my smoking.

"Had kind of a run-in with Graff in the office. He's getting too darn fresh. I'll stand for a good deal, but once in a while I got to assert my authority, and I jumped him. 'Stan', I said—— Well, I told him just exactly where he got off.

"Funny kind of day. Makes you feel restless.

"Wellllllllll, uh——" That sleepest sound in the world, the terminal yawn. Mrs. Babbitt yawned with it, and looked grateful as he droned, "How about going to bed, eh? Don't suppose Rone and Ted will be in till all hours. Yep, funny kind of a day; not terribly warm but yet—— Gosh, I'd like—— Some day I'm going to take a long motor trip."

"Yes, we'd enjoy that", she yawned.

He looked away from her as he realized that he did not wish to have her go with him. As he locked doors and tried windows and set the heat regulator so that the furnace-drafts would

open automatically in the morning, he sighed a little, heavy with a lonely feeling which perplexed and frightened him. So absent-minded was he that he could not remember which window-catches he had inspected, and through the darkness, fumbling at unseen perilous chairs, he crept back to try them all over again. His feet were loud on the steps as he clumped upstairs at the end of this great and treacherous day of veiled rebellions.

III

Before breakfast he always reverted to up-state village boyhood, and shrank from the complex urban demands of shaving, bathing, deciding whether the current shirt was clean enough for another day. Whenever he stayed home in the evening he went to bed early, and thriftily got ahead in those dismal duties. It was his luxurious custom to shave while sitting snugly in a tubful of hot water. He may be viewed to-night as a plump, smooth, pink, baldish, podgy goodman, robbed of the importance of spectacles, squatting in breast-high water, scraping his lather-smearred cheeks with a safety-razor like a tiny lawn-mower, and with melancholy dignity clawing through the water to recover a slippery and active piece of soap.

He was lulled to dreaming by the caressing warmth. The light fell on the inner surface of the tub in a pattern of delicate wrinkled lines which slipped with a green sparkle over the curving porcelain as the clear water trembled. Babbitt lazily watched it; noted that along the silhouette of his legs against the radiance on the bottom of the tub, the shadows of the air-bubbles clinging to the hairs were reproduced as strange jungle mosses. He patted the water, and the reflected light capsized and leaped and volleyed. He was content and childish. He played. He shaved a swath down the calf of one plump leg.

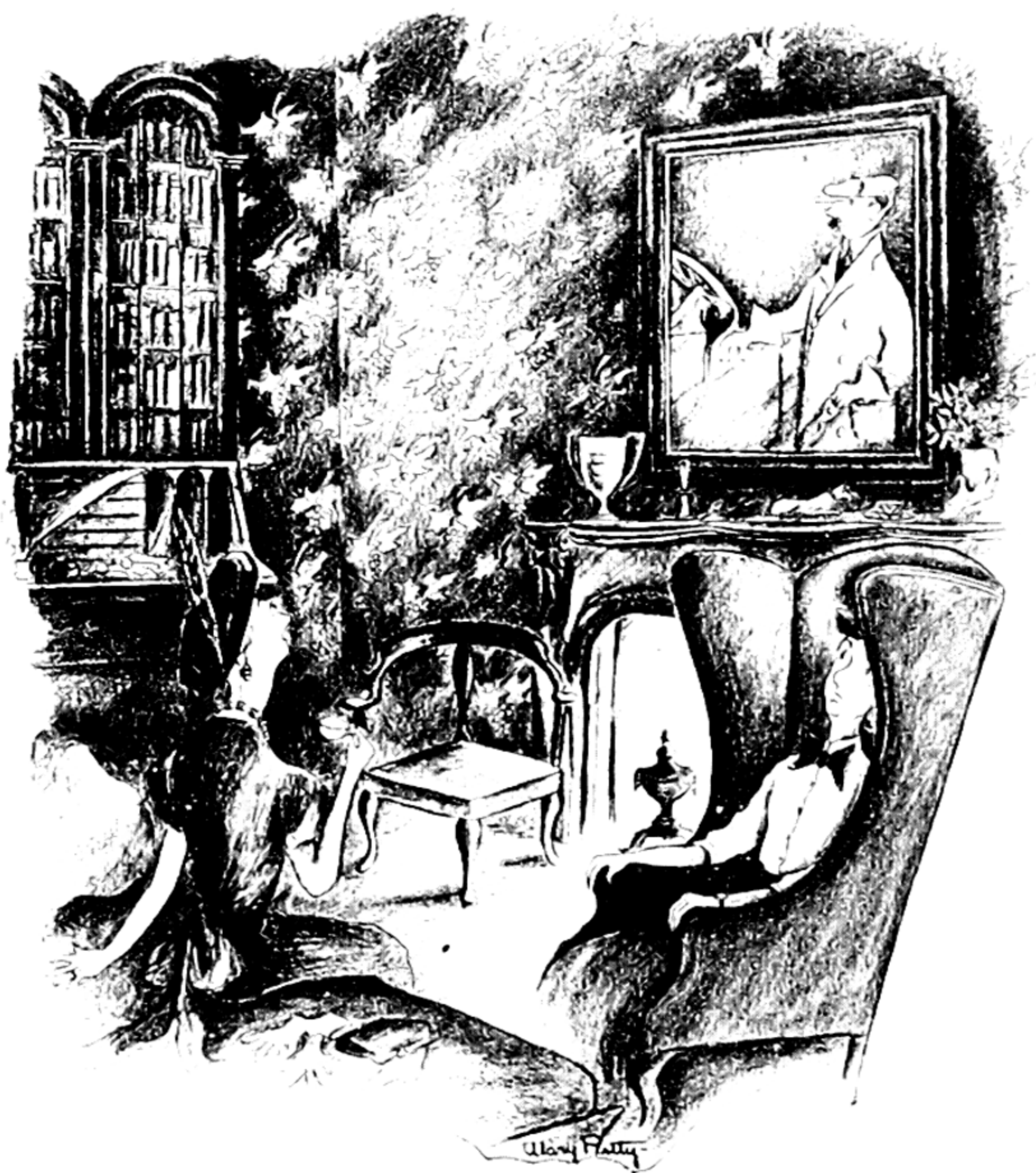
The drain-pipe was dripping, a dulcet and lively song: drippety drip drip dribble, drippety drip drip drip. He was



Chas. Addams

New Yorker

"Personally, I can't imagine what he sees in her"



Mary Petty

New Yorker

"I'll wait for him one more year. I keep telling myself he may be having engine trouble somewhere"

enchanted by it. He looked at the solid tub, the beautiful nickel taps, the tiled walls of the room, and felt virtuous in the possession of this splendour.

He roused himself and spoke gruffly to his bath-things. "Come here! You've done enough fooling!" he reproved the treacherous soap, and defied the scratchy nail-brush with "Oh, you would, would you!" He soaped himself, and rinsed himself, and austere rubbed himself; he noted a hole in the Turkish towel, and meditatively thrust a finger through it, and marched back to the bedroom, a grave and unbending citizen.

There was a moment of gorgeous abandon, a flash of melodrama such as he found in traffic-driving, when he laid out a clean collar, discovered that it was frayed in front, and tore it up with a magnificent yeeeeeeing sound.

Most important of all was the preparation of his bed and the sleeping-porch.

It is not known whether he enjoyed his sleeping-porch because of the fresh air or because it was the standard thing to have a sleeping-porch.

Just as he was an Elk, a Booster, and a member of the Chamber of Commerce, just as the priests of the Presbyterian Church determined his every religious belief and the senators who controlled the Republican party decided in little smoky rooms in Washington what he should think about disarmament, tariff, and Germany, so did the large national advertisers fix the surface of his life, fix what he believed to be his individuality. These standard advertised wares—toothpastes, socks, tyres, cameras, instantaneous hot-water heaters—were his symbols and proofs of excellence; at first the signs, then the substitutes, for joy and passion and wisdom.

But none of these advertised tokens of financial and social success was more significant than a sleeping-porch with a sun-parlour below.

The rites of preparing for bed were elaborate and unchanging. The blankets had to be tucked in at the foot of his cot. (Also, the reason why the maid hadn't tucked in the blankets

had to be discussed with Mrs. Babbitt.) The rag rug was adjusted so that his bare feet would strike it when he arose in the morning. The alarm clock was wound. The hot-water bottle was filled and placed precisely two feet from the bottom of the cot.

These tremendous undertakings yielded to his determination; one by one they were announced to Mrs. Babbitt and smashed through to accomplishment. At last his brow cleared, and in his "Gnight!" rang virile power. But there was yet need of courage. As he sank into sleep, just at the first exquisite relaxation, the Doppelbrau car came home. He bounced into wakefulness, lamenting, "Why the devil can't some people never get to bed at a reasonable hour?" So familiar was he with the process of putting up his own car that he awaited each step like an able executioner condemned to his own rack.

The car was insultingly cheerful on the drive. The car door opened and banged shut, then the garage door slid open, grating on the sill, and the car door again. The motor raced for the climb up into the garage and raced once more, explosively, before it was shut off. A final opening and slamming of the car door. Silence then, a horrible silence filled with waiting, till the leisurely Mr. Doppelbrau had examined the state of his tyres and had at last shut the garage door. Instantly, for Babbitt, a blessed state of oblivion.

IV

At that moment in the city of Zenith, Horace Updike was making love to Lucile McKelvey in her mauve drawing-room on Royal Ridge, after their return from a lecture by an eminent English novelist. Updike was Zenith's professional bachelor; a slim-waisted man of forty-six with an effeminate voice and taste in flowers, cretonnes, and flappers. Mrs. McKelvey was red-haired, creamy, discontented, exquisite, rude, and honest. Updike tried his invariable first manœuvre—touching her nervous wrist.

"Don't be an idiot!" she said.

"Do you mind awfully?"

"No! That's what I mind!"

He changed to conversation. He was famous at conversation. He spoke reasonably of psycho-analysis, Long Island polo, and the Ming platter he had found in Vancouver. She promised to meet him in Deauville, the coming summer "though", she sighed, "it's becoming too dreadfully banal; nothing but Americans and frowsty English baronesses".

And at that moment in Zenith, a cocaine-runner and a prostitute were drinking cocktails in Healey Hanson's saloon on Front Street. Since national prohibition was now in force and since Zenith was notoriously law-abiding, they were compelled to keep the cocktails innocent by drinking them out of tea-cups. The lady threw her cup at the cocaine-runner's head. He worked his revolver out of the pocket in his sleeve, and casually murdered her.

At that moment in Zenith, two men sat in a laboratory. For thirty-seven hours now they had been working on a report of their investigations of synthetic rubber.

At that moment in Zenith, there was a conference of four union officials as to whether the twelve thousand coal-miners within a hundred miles of the city should strike. Of these men one resembled a testy and prosperous grocer, one a Yankee carpenter, one a soda-clerk, and one a Russian Jewish actor. The Russian Jew quoted Kautsky, Gene Debs, and Abraham Lincoln.

At that moment a G. A. R. veteran was dying. He had come from the Civil War straight to a farm which, though it was officially within the city-limits of Zenith, was primitive as the backwoods. He had never ridden in a motor-car, never seen a bath-tub, never read any book save the Bible, McGuffey's readers, and religious tracts; and he believed that the earth is flat, that the English are the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, and that the United States is a democracy.

At that moment the steel and cement town which composed the factory of the Pullmore Tractor Company of Zenith was

running on night shift to fill an order of tractors for the Polish army. It hummed like a million bees, glared through its wide windows like a volcano. Along the high wire fences, search-lights played on cinder-lined yards, switch-tracks, and armed guards on patrol.

At that moment Mike Monday was finishing a meeting. Mr. Monday, the distinguished evangelist, the best-known Protestant pontiff in America, had once been a prize-fighter. Satan had not dealt justly with him. As a prize-fighter he gained nothing but his crooked nose, his celebrated vocabulary, and his stage-presence. The service of the Lord had been more profitable. He was about to retire with a fortune. It had been well earned, for, to quote his last report, "Rev. Mr. Monday, the Prophet with a Punch, has shown that he is the world's greatest salesman of salvation, and that by efficient organization the overhead of spiritual regeneration may be kept down to an unprecedented rock-bottom basis. He has converted over two hundred thousand lost and priceless souls at an average cost of less than ten dollars a head."

Of the larger cities of the land, only Zenith had hesitated to submit its vices to Mike Monday and his expert reclamation corps. The more enterprising organizations of the city had voted to invite him—Mr. George F. Babbitt had once praised him in a speech at the Boosters' Club. But there was opposition from certain Episcopalian and Congregationalist ministers, those renegades whom Mr. Monday so finely called "a bunch of gospel-pushers with dish-water instead of blood, a gang of squealers that need more dust on the knees of their pants and more hair on their skinny old chests." This opposition had been crushed when the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce had reported to a committee of manufacturers that in every city where he had appeared, Mr. Monday had turned the minds of workmen from wages and hours to higher things, and thus averted strikes. He was immediately invited.

An expense fund of forty thousand dollars had been underwritten; out on the County Fair Grounds a Mike Monday

Tabernacle had been erected, to seat fifteen thousand people. In it the prophet was at this moment concluding his message:

"There's a lot of smart college professors and tea-guzzling slobs in this burg that say I'm a roughneck and a never-wuzzer, and my knowledge of history is not-yet. Oh, there's a gang of woolly-whiskered book-lice that think they know more than Almighty God, and prefer a lot of Hun science and smutty German criticism to the straight and simple Word of God. Oh, there's a swell bunch of Lizzie boys and lemon-suckers and pie-faces and infidels and beer-bloated scribblers that love to fire off their filthy mouths and yip that Mike Monday is vulgar and full of mush. Those pups are saying now that I hog the gospel-show, that I'm in it for the coin. Well, now listen, folks! I'm going to give those birds a chance! They can stand right up here and tell me to my face that I'm a galoot and a liar and a hick! Only if they do—if they do!—don't faint with surprise if some of those rum-dumm liars get one good swift poke from Mike, with all the kick of God's Flaming Righteousness behind the wallop! Well, come on, folks! Who says it? Who says Mike Monday is a four-flush and a yahoo? Huh? Don't I see anybody standing up? Well, there you are! Now I guess the folks in this man's town will quit listening to all this kyoodling from behind the fence; I guess you'll quit listening to the guys that pan and roast and kick and beef, and vomit out filthy atheism; and all of you'll come in, with every grain of pep and reverence you got, and boost all together for Jesus Christ and His everlasting mercy and tenderness!"

V

At that moment Seneca Doane, the radical lawyer, and Dr. Kurt Yavitch, the histologist (whose report on the destruction of epithelial cells under radium had made the name of Zenith known in Munich, Prague, and Rome), were talking in Doane's library.

"Zenith's a city with gigantic power—gigantic buildings, gigantic machines, gigantic transportation", meditated Doane.

"I hate your city. It has standardized all the beauty out of life. It is one big railroad station—with all the people taking tickets for the best cemeteries", Dr. Yavitch said placidly.

Doane roused. "I'm hanged if it is! You make me sick, Kurt, with your perpetual whine about 'standardization'. Don't you suppose any other nation is 'standardized'? Is anything more standardized than England, with every house that can afford it having the same muffins at the same tea-hour, and every retired general going to exactly the same evensong at the same grey stone church with a square tower, and every golfing prig in Harris tweeds saying 'Right you are!' to every other prosperous ass? Yet I love England. And for standardization—just look at the pavement cafés in France and the love-making in Italy!

"Standardization is excellent, *per se*. When I buy an Ingersoll watch or a Ford, I get a better tool for less money, and I know precisely what I'm getting, and that leaves me more time and energy to be individual in. And—— I remember once in London I saw a picture of an American suburb, in a toothpaste ad. on the back of the *Saturday Evening Post*—an elm-lined snowy street of these new houses, Georgian some of 'em, or with low raking roofs and—— The kind of street you'd find here in Zenith, say in Floral Heights. Open. Trees. Grass. And I was homesick! There's no other country in the world that has such pleasant houses. And I don't care if they *are* standardized. It's a corking standard!

"No, what I fight in Zenith is standardization of thought, and, of course, the traditions of competition. The real villains of the piece are the clean, kind, industrious Family Men who use every known brand of trickery and cruelty to ensure the prosperity of their cubs. The worst thing about these fellows is that they're so good and, in their work at least, so intelligent. You can't hate them properly, and yet their standardized minds are the enemy.

"Then this boosting—— Sneakingly I have a notion that

Zenith is a better place to live in than Manchester or Glasgow or Lyons or Berlin or Turin——”

“It is not, and I have lived in most of them”, murmured Dr. Yavitch.

“Well, matter of taste. Personally, I prefer a city with a future so unknown that it excites my imagination. But what I particularly want——”

“You”, said Dr. Yavitch, “are a middle-road liberal, and you haven’t the slightest idea what you want. I, being a revolutionist, know exactly what I want—and what I want now is a drink.”

VI

At that moment in Zenith, Jake Offutt, the politician, and Henry T. Thompson were in conference. Offutt suggested, “The thing to do is to get your fool son-in-law, Babbitt, to put it over. He’s one of these patriotic guys. When he grabs a piece of property for the gang, he makes it look like we were dyin’ of love for the dear peepul, and I do love to buy respectability—reasonable. Wonder how long we can keep it up, Hank? We’re safe as long as the good little boys like George Babbitt and all the nice respectable labour-leaders think you and me are rugged patriots. There’s swell pickings for an honest politician here, Hank: a whole city working to provide cigars and fried chicken and dry Martinis for us, and rallying to our banner with indignation, oh, fierce indignation, whenever some squealer like this fellow Seneca Doane comes along! Honest, Hank, a smart codger like me ought to be ashamed of himself if he didn’t milk cattle like them, when they come around mooing for it! But the Traction gang can’t get away with grand larceny like it used to. I wonder when—— Hank, I wish we could fix some way to run this fellow Seneca Doane out of town. It’s him or us!”

At that moment in Zenith, three hundred and forty or fifty thousand Ordinary People were asleep, a vast unpenetrated shadow. In the slum beyond the railroad tracks, a young man

who for six months had sought work, turned on the gas, and killed himself and his wife.

At that moment Lloyd Mallam, the poet, owner of the Hafiz Book Shop, was finishing a rondeau to show how diverting was life amid the feuds of mediæval Florence, but how dull it was in so obvious a place as Zenith.

And at that moment George F. Babbitt turned ponderously in bed—the last turn, signifying that he'd had enough of this worried business of falling asleep and was about it in earnest.

Instantly he was in the magic dream. He was somewhere among unknown people who laughed at him. He slipped away, ran down the paths of a midnight garden, and at the gate the fairy child was waiting. Her dear and tranquil hand caressed his cheek. He was gallant and wise and well-beloved; warm ivory were her arms; and beyond perilous moors the brave sea glittered.

—*Babbitt*

DON MARQUIS

(1878-1937)

There are many movements for freedom these days, but no one starts a Free Verse Movement. Its popularity has passed. Poets prefer the discipline of rhyme and metre. But Donald Marquis, Illinois-born journalist, thought of a new way of debunking the free versifiers while they were in their prime. He imagined that one of them, for his sins of omission, had been forced to transmigrate into the body of a cockroach. This cockroach, Archy, went on writing vers libre because he couldn't reach the shift-key of the typewriter to make capitals. He met a cat, Mehitabel, who had once been Cleopatra and several other lively ladies, and the ARCHY AND MEHITABEL books, shorn of capitals throughout, enabled Marquis to indulge in plenty of satire on contemporary society, behind the oft-chanted refrains of toujours gai and "wotthehell, wotthehell".

Studying the long list of Don Marquis's other books, I suspect that he nursed a secret wish to be known as a serious writer—and how that wish must haunt an established humorist. He wrote novels, set in New York and Paris, Negro sketches, satires in the manner of Mark Twain, Elizabethan comedies, a play about Christ and a dramatic version of the Tristan and Iseult legend! His reputation was first made by a bibulous comedy called THE OLD SOAK (1921).

CHEERIO MY DEARIO

(by archy the cockroach)

well boss i met
mehitabel the cat
trying to dig a
frozen lamb chop
out of a snow
drift the other day

a heluva comedown
that is for me archy
she says a few
brief centuries
ago one of old
king
tut
ankh
amen s favorite
queens and today
the village scavenger
but wotthehell
archy wotthehell

its cheerio
my deario that
pulls a lady through
see here mehitabel
i said i thought
you told me that
it was cleopatra
you used to be
before you
transmigrated into

the carcase of a cat
where do you get
this tut
ankh
amen stuff
question mark

i was several
ladies my little
insect says she
being cleopatra was
only an incident
in my career
and i was always getting
the rough end of it
always being
misunderstood by some
strait laced
prune faced bunch
of prissy mouthed
sisters of uncharity
the things that
have been said
about me archy
exclamation point

and all simply
because i was a
live dame
the palaces i have
been kicked out of
in my time
exclamation point

but wotthehell
little archy wot
the hell
its cheerio
my deario
that pulls a
lady through
exclamation point

framed archy always
framed that is the
story of all my lives
no chance for a dame
with the anvil chorus
if she shows a little
motion it seems to
me only yesterday
that the luxur local
number one of
the ladies axe
association got me in
dutch with king tut and
he slipped me the
sarcophagus always my
luck yesterday an empress
and to-day too
emaciated to interest
a vivisectionist but
toujours gai archy
toujours gai and always
a lady in spite of hell
and transmigration
once a queen
archy
period

one of her
feet was frozen
but on the other three
she began to caper and
dance singing it s
cheerio my deario
that pulls a lady
through her morals may
have been mislaid somewhere
in the centuries boss but
i admire her spirit

archy

ARCHY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

if all the verse that I have wrote
were boiled together in a kettle
twould make a meal for every goat
from nome to popocatapetl
mexico

and all the prose what i have penned
if laid together end to end
would reach from russia to south bend
indiana

but all the money what i saved
from all them works at which i slaved
is not enough to get me shaved
every morning

and all the dams which i care
if heaped together in the air
would not reach much of anywhere
they wouldnt

because i dont shave every day
and i write for arts sake anyway
and always hate to take my pay
i loathe it

and all of you who credit that
could sit down on an opera hat
and never crush the darned thing flat
you skeptics

archy



Geo. Price

New Yorke

"Whew! 'Tain't a fit night out for man nor beast!"

ROARK BRADFORD

Marc Connelly's *GREEN PASTURES* needs no introduction to English readers. What is not so well known is that this play about *De Lawd and de Fish Fry* is adapted from a book by Roark Bradford, *OLD ADAM AND HIS CHILLUN*, published in 1928.

Much of America's Negro literature comes from White Americans. The most renowned exponent of that soft and appealing dialect, Joel Chandler Harris, continued his *UNCLE REMUS* stories for over twenty years. Many of us can remember one or more brightly coloured Uncle Remus books in the nursery library, along with Lewis Carroll and the *Green Fairy Book*. *Brer Rabbit* was the Mickey Mouse of our small years.

But Bradford specialized not in *Tar-Babies* and *Rabbits*, but in Negro Bible-stories and tales and ballads centred round the epic figure of John Henry, Negro hero of the 'seventies, who, so legend goes, died of over-exertion when driving steel faster than a steam-drill. The John Henry stories, collected by Roark Bradford, appeared in 1931 and a dramatized version was produced only two years ago.

The story of *Old King David* is full of the authentic, friendly, homely Negro atmosphere.



Helen Hokinson

New Yorker

"George, guess what! I'm starting a swimming pool"



Peter Arno

New Yorker

"Well, back to the old drawing board"

THE ADULTERATION OF OLD KING DAVID

Ole King David made a mighty king. He always had his armies out fightin' for de Lawd, and he was always busy at home, holdin' cou't and keepin' de women-folk straightened out.

Well, one day ole King David was settin' on de front po'ch, jest settin' back, smokin' a cigar and lettin' his dinner settle. He was a mighty king, but he acted jest like a natchal man, too.

So purty soon a messenger rid up and bowed down to de ground and say, "Yo' Majesty King David, de enemies er de Lawd is done whupped".

"Who say de enemies er de Lawd is whupped, messenger?" say David.

"De General say dey's whupped", says de messenger.

"Well, I don't b'lieve hit", say ole King David. "Dem enemies er de Lawd is a awful pack of liars, and I speck they git de General to say they's whupped jest so's our boys won't fly in and give 'em a sho'nuff whuppin'. So you jest up and ride back and tell our boys to light into de enemies ag'in and stay lit till dey hollers, 'Calf rope'."

So de messenger went ridin' off and ole King David r'ared back ag'in, smokin' his cigar and settlin' his dinner.

Well, David was a king and a mighty king. But David was a man, jest like any yuther man. And whar you see a man, hit's bound to be a woman hangin' round somewheres close by. So right across de road was de house of a woman named Miz Uriah.

Miz Uriah was one er deseyar married womens which is good-lookin' and don't keer who knows hit. She's jest de kind dat's always waitin' for her husband to git outer de house so's she kin start messin' round.

Her husband was in de armies er de Lawd, fightin' de enemies, and he left her home to look after de chickens and

things while he gone. But dat gal ain' studdin' no chickens. She's got her mind on de menfolks.

And while ole King David is tawkin' to de messenger, she's hidin' behind de window blinds, a-watchin'. And soon as she see de messenger leave, she runs back and put on her Sunday dress and goes over to whar ole King David is settin'.

"Good mawnin', King David, Yo' Majesty", she says, sweetenin' up her voice.

"Good mawnin', sister", say ole King David. "What can I do for you dis mawning?"

"Well", say Miz Uriah, casual-like, "I comed over to ax you does you yar somethin' 'bout my husband. He ain't much husband, but he better'n no husband a-tall. I guess he's about all a ugly ole gal like me kin git, anyway. I wish I was a good-lookin' gal."

"You don't look so bad, gal", say ole King David.

"Aw, hysh up, Yo' Majesty", says Miz Uriah. "You know I ain't no good-lookin' gal. Jest look at 'at ole ugly laig. Look at 'at flat chest—" and she started twistin' herse'f round showin' off.

But David is a good man and he know what she's up to, so he say: "Git on back home, gal, befo' I puts you in jail for tryin' to adulterate My Majesty. Git home! You yar me?"

Well, Miz Uriah got on back 'cross de road and ole King David sets down and writes a psa'm 'bout how he resisted temptation. But dat woman ain't started on him yit. She goes on 'cross de road and back in de house, and den de fust thing old King David know, he sees her draggin' a big washtub out on de front po'ch and start pourin' water in hit.

"Gonter do some washin' today, Sister Uriah?" say ole King David.

"Some, Yo' Majesty", she say.

"I thought you washed yo' clothes on Monday", say de king.

"I does, Yo' Majesty", say Miz Uriah.

"Today's Sadday", say ole King David.

"I ain't said I was gonter wash no clothes today, Yo'

Majesty", say Miz Uriah. "Dis is my bath day." And dat gal starts undressin' right out on de front po'ch, right in front er ole King David.

"Whyn't you git back in dat house to git naked, gal?" say ole King David. "You ain't got a lick er sense. S'pose somebody come down de road and sees you?"

"S'pose'n they does", says Miz Uriah. "They won't see nothin' but ole ugly me." And she went right on takin' off her clothes.

Ole King David set and watched her to de last stitch fell off and she stepped in de tub.

"Gal!" say ole King David, "ain't you got no shame? Whyn't you git back in dat house? Standin' out yar naked as a jay bird! Somebody comin' down dat road and see you, fust thing you know."

So Miz Uriah says, kinder baby-like: "Maybe you's right, Yo' Majesty, and I'm is mighty ashame'. But I can't tote dis tub back in de house all by myse'f. Efn Yo' Majesty'll he'p me tote hit in, I'll git back in de house."

Well, yar was ole King David tryin' to keep de kingdom f'm gittin' scandalized by dis fool gal takin' a bath on de front po'ch, and so hit wa'n't nothin' for him to do but go on and he'p her tote de tub back in de house. So he gits up and goes over to he'p her tote de tub back in de house, and dat's de last anybody seed of ole King David to Monday mawnin', when de Lawd come wawkin' up and seed him settin' out on his own fron po'ch ag'in, lookin' mighty sad and sinful.

"Heyho, King David!" say de Lawd. "Been writin' any mo' psa'ms since I been round yar?"

"I writ one", say ole King David, "all 'bout how I was resistin' temptation f'm a fool woman."

"Dat sounds good", say de Lawd. "Wait'll I git settled down in dis cheer, and I wants you to read it at me."

"Can't", say ole King David. "I done tored hit up."

So de Lawd and ole King David sot on de po'ch, jest leanin' back and sayin' nothin', to finally yar come Miz Uriah draggin'

her washtub out on de front po'ch ag'in, and pourin' water in hit.

Ole King David spotted her and he tried to signal to her to git back in de house, 'cause de Lawd was dar, but she didn't pay him no mind. She jest kept right on pourin' water in de tub. Den when she got de water in de tub, she brought out a bundle er clothes and started washin' 'em.

"Gonter do some washin', sister?" say de Lawd.

"Yes, Lawd. Monday's my regular washday", she say.

Den de Lawd turn to ole King David and say, "Dat's a mighty fine-lookin' neighbor you got over yonder. What's her name?"

"Dat's Uriah's wife", say King David.

"You mean hit's Uriah's widder", say de Lawd.

"Uriah's which?" say de king.

"Widder", say de Lawd. "Ole Uriah got mixed up wid one er my enemies, and when they got done wid him they had to haul him off in a sack."

"Naw?" say ole King David. "So she's a widder woman! Well I be doggonel!" So he got up and started back in de house.

"Whar you goin' now King David?" say de Lawd.

"To git my pencil and paper", say ole King David. "I'm gonter write another psa'm."

—*Old Adam and His Chillun*

CLARENCE DAY

(1874-1935)

The author of LIFE WITH FATHER was a long time thinking out what to say about his remarkable parent. Mr. Day, Senr., did not feature as a comic Moulton Barrett until 1932, but when the mature and polished stories unfolded, people agreed that Clarence had done well to wait that long. His English reputation rests largely on this series of books. In real life Father had been a prosperous Wall Street banker, son of the founder of the New York Sun, but Clarence refused a business career and joined the navy. He was an invalid during the last thirty years of his life, and died while LIFE WITH MOTHER was still in manuscript.

It is a pity that Father's fame has obscured the rest of his work. His drawings for THOUGHTS WITHOUT WORDS (1928) are hauntingly like Blake, and underneath each picture appears a despairing line or two.

*What drags the fiery artist down?
What keeps the pioneer in town?
Who hates to see the seaman roam?
It is the wife, it is the home.*

His SCENES FROM THE MEZOZOIC and THIS SIMIAN WORLD are a reminder that man's place of honour on the evolutionary scale cannot be taken for granted.

FATHER WAKES UP THE VILLAGE

One of the most disgraceful features of life in the country, Father often declared, was the general inefficiency and slackness of small village tradesmen. He said he had originally supposed that such men were interested in business, and that that was why they had opened their shops and sunk capital in them, but no, they never used them for anything but gossip and sleep. They took no interest in civilized ways. Hadn't heard of them probably. He said that of course if he were camping out on the veldt or the tundra, he would expect few conveniences in the neighbourhood and would do his best to forgo them, but why should he be confronted with the wilds twenty miles from New York?

Usually, when Father talked this way, he was thinking of ice. He strongly objected to spending even one day of his life without a glass of cold water beside his plate at every meal. There was never any difficulty about this in our home in the city. A great silver ice-water pitcher stood on the sideboard all day, and when Father was home its outer surface was frosted with cold. When he had gone to the office, the ice was allowed to melt sometimes, and the water got warmish, but never in the evening, or on Sundays, when Father might want some. He said he liked water, he told us it was one of Nature's best gifts, but he said that like all her gifts it was unfit for human consumption unless served in a suitable manner. And the only right way to serve water was icy cold.

It was still more important that each kind of wine should be served at whatever the right temperature was for it. And kept at it, too. No civilized man would take dinner without wine, Father said, and no man who knew the first thing about it would keep his wine in hot cellars. Mother thought this was a mere whim of Father's. She said he was fussy. How about people who lived in apartments, she asked him, who didn't

have cellars? Father replied that civilized persons didn't live in apartments.

One of the first summers that Father ever spent in the country, he rented a furnished house in Irvington on the Hudson, not far from New York. It had a garden, a stable, and one or two acres of woods, and Father arranged to camp out there with many misgivings. He took a train for New York every morning at eight-ten, after breakfast, and he got back between five and six, bringing anything special we might need along with him, such as a basket of peaches from the city, or a fresh package of his own private coffee.

Things went well until one day in August the ice-man didn't come. It was hot, eh and his horses were tired, and he hated to come to us anyhow because the house we had rented was perched up on top of a hill. He said afterward that on this particular day he had not liked the idea of making his horses drag the big ice-wagon up that sharp and steep road to sell us fifty cents' worth of ice. Besides, all his ice was gone anyhow—the heat had melted it on him. He had four or five other good reasons. So he didn't come.

Father was in town. The rest of us waited in astonishment wondering what could be the matter. We were so used to the regularity and punctilio of life in the city that it seemed unbelievable to us that the ice-man would fail to appear. We discussed it at lunch. Mother said that the minute he arrived she would have to give him a talking to. After lunch had been over an hour and he still hadn't come, she got so worried about what Father would say that she decided to send to the village.

There was no telephone, of course. There were no motors. She would have liked to spare the horse if she could, for he had been worked hard that week. But as this was a crisis, she sent for Morgan, the coachman, and told him to bring up the dog-cart.

The big English dog-cart arrived. Two of us boys and the coachman drove off. The sun beat down on our heads. Where the heavy harness was rubbing on Brownies, coat, he broke

out into a thick, whitish lather. Morgan was sullen. When we boys were along he couldn't take off his stiff black high hat or unbutton his thick, padded coat. Worse still, from his point of view, he couldn't stop at a bar for a drink. That was why Mother had sent us along with him, of course, and he knew it.

We arrived at the little town after a while and I went into the Coal & Ice Office. A wiry-looking old clerk was dozing in a corner, his chair tilted back and his chin resting on his dingy shirt-front. I woke this clerk up. I told him about the crisis at our house.

He listened unwillingly, and when I had finished he said it was a very hot day.

I waited. He spat. He said he didn't see what he could do, because the ice-house was locked.

I explained earnestly that this was the Day family and that something must be done right away.

He hunted around his desk a few minutes, found his chewing tobacco, and said, "Well, sonny, I'll see what I can do about it".

I thanked him very much, as that seemed to me to settle the matter. I went back to the dog-cart. Brownie's check-rein had been unhooked, and he stood with his head hanging down. He looked sloppy. It wouldn't have been so bad with a buggy, but a slumpy horse in a dog-cart can look pretty awful. Also, Morgan was gone. He reappeared soon, coming out of a side door down the street, buttoning up his coat, but with his hat tilted back. He looked worse than the horse.

We checked up the weary animal's head again and drove slowly home. A hot little breeze in our rear moved our dust along with us. At the foot of the hill, we boys got out, to spare Brownie our extra weight. We unhooked his check-rein again. He dragged the heavy cart up.

Mother was sitting out on the piazza. I said the ice would come soon now. We waited.

It was a long afternoon.

At five o'clock, Brownie was hitched up again. The coach-

man and I drove back to the village. We had to meet Father's train. We also had to break the bad news to him that he would have no ice-water for dinner, and that there didn't seem to be any way to chill his Rhine-wine.

The village was as sleepy as ever, but when Father arrived and learned what the situation was, he said it would have to wake up. He told me that he had had a long, trying day at the office, the city was hotter than the Desert of Sahara, and he was completely worn out, but that if any ice-man imagined for a moment he could behave in that manner, he, Father, would take his damned head off. He strode into the Coal & Ice Office.

When he came out, he had the clerk with him, and the clerk had put on his hat and was vainly trying to calm Father down. He was promising that he himself would come with the ice-wagon if the driver had left, and deliver all the ice we could use, and he'd be there inside an hour.

Father said, "Inside of an hour be hanged, you'll have to come quicker than that".

The clerk got rebellious. He pointed out that he'd have to go to the stables and hitch up the horses himself, and then get someone to help him hoist a block of ice out of the ice-house. He said it was 'most time for his supper and he wasn't used to such work. He was only doing it as a favour to Father. He was just being neighbourly.

Father said he'd have to be neighbourly in a hurry, because he wouldn't stand it, and he didn't know what the devil the ice company meant by such actions.

The clerk said it wasn't his fault, was it? It was the driver's.

This was poor tactics, of course, because it wound Father up again. He wasn't interested in whose fault it was, he said. It was everybody's. What he wanted was ice and plenty of it, and he wanted it in time for his dinner. A small crowd which had collected by this time listened admiringly as Father shook his finger at the clerk and said he dined at six-thirty.

The clerk went loping off toward the stables to hitch

up the big horses. Father waited till he'd turned the corner.

Followed by the crowd, Father marched to the butcher's.

After nearly a quarter of an hour, the butcher and his assistant came out, unwillingly carrying what seemed to be a coffin, wrapped in a black mackintosh. It was a huge cake of ice.

Father got in, in front, sat on the box seat beside me, and took up the reins. We drove off. The coachman was on the rear seat, sitting back-in-back to us, keeping the ice from sliding out with the calves of his legs. Father went a few doors up the street to a little house-furnishings shop and got out again.

I went in the shop with him this time. I didn't want to miss any further scenes of this performance. Father began proceedings by demanding to see all the man's ice-boxes. There were only a few. Father selected the largest he had. Then, when the sale seemed arranged, and when the proprietor was smiling broadly with pleasure at this sudden windfall, Father said he was buying that refrigerator only on two conditions.

The first was that it had to be delivered at his home before dinner. Yes, now. Right away. The shopkeeper explained over and over that this was impossible, but that he'd have it up the next morning, sure. Father said no, he didn't want it the next morning, he had to have it at once. He added that he dined at six-thirty, and that there was no time to waste.

The shopkeeper gave in.

The second condition, which was then put to him firmly, was staggering. Father announced that that ice-box must be delivered to him full of ice.

The man said he was not in the ice business.

Father said, "Very well then I don't want it."

The man said obstinately that it was an excellent ice-box.

Father made a short speech. It was the one that we had heard so often at home about the slackness of village tradesmen, and he put such strong emotion and scorn in it that his voice rang through the shop. He closed it by saying, "An ice-

box is of no use to a man without ice, and if you haven't the enterprise, the gumption, to sell your damned goods to a customer who wants them delivered in condition to use, you had better shut up your shop and be done with it. Not in the ice business, hey? You aren't in business at all!" He strode out.

The dealer came to the door just as Father was getting into the dog-cart, and called out anxiously, "All right, Mr. Day. I'll get that refrigerator filled for you and send it up right away."

Father drove quickly home. A thunderstorm seemed to be brewing and this had waked Brownie up, or else Father was putting some of his own supply of energy into him. The poor old boy probably needed it as again he climbed the steep hill. I got out at the foot, and as I swalked along behind I saw that Morgan was looking kind of deperate, trying to sit in the correct position with his arms folded while he held in the ice with his legs. The big cake was continually slipping and sliding around under the seat and doing its best to plunge out. It had bumped against his calves all the way home. They must have got good and cold.

When the dog-cart drew up at our door, Father remained seated a moment while Morgan, the waitress, and I pulled and pushed at the ice. The mackintosh had come off it by this time. We dumped it out on the grass. A little later, after Morgan had unharnessed and hurriedly rubbed down the horse, he ran back to help us boys break the cake up, rush the chunks around to the back door, and cram them into the ice-box while Father was dressing for dinner.

Mother had calmed down by this time. The Rhine wine was cooling. "Don't get it too cold", Father called.

Then the ice-man arrived.

The old clerk was with him, like a warden in charge of a prisoner. Mother stepped out to meet them, and at once gave the ice-man the scolding that had been waiting for him all day.

The clerk asked how much ice we wanted. Mother said we

didn't want any now. Mr. Day had brought home some, and we had no room for more in the ice-box.

The ice-man looked at the clerk. The clerk tried to speak, but no words came.

Father put his head out of the window. "Take a hundred pounds, Vinnie", he said. "There's another box coming."

A hundred-pound block was brought into the house and heaved into the washtub. The waitress put the mackintosh over it. The ice-wagon left.

Just as we all sat down to dinner, the new ice-box arrived, full.

Mother was provoked. She said, "Really, Clare!" crossly. "Now what am I to do with that piece that's waiting out in the washtub?"

Father chuckled.

She told him he didn't know the first thing about keeping house, and went out to the laundry with the waitress to tackle the problem. The thunderstorm broke and crashed. We boys ran around shutting the windows upstairs.

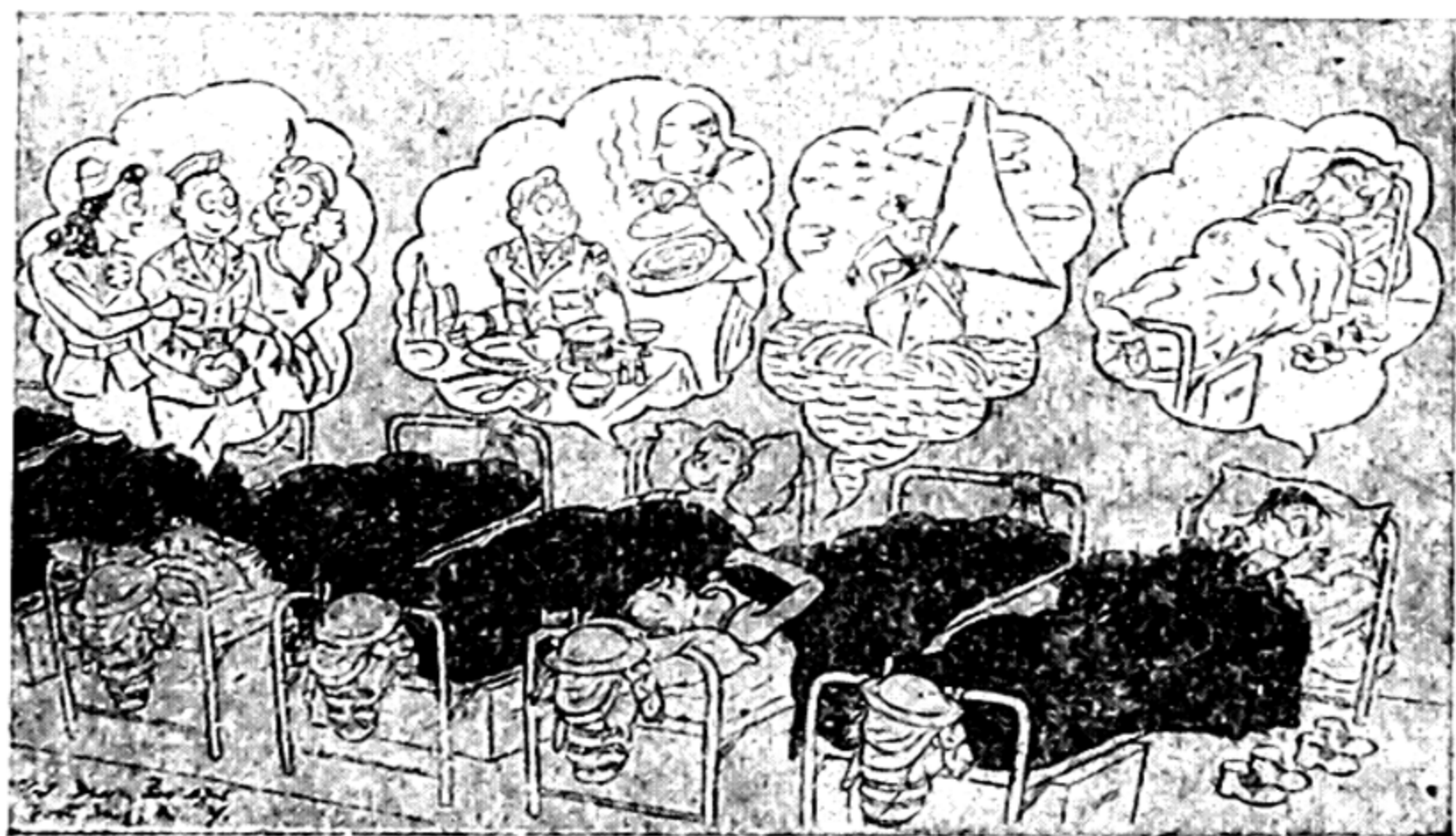
Father's soul was at peace. He dined well, and he had his coffee and cognac served to him on the piazza. The storm was over by then. Father snuffed a deep breath of the sweet-smelling air and smoked his evening cigar.

"Clarence", he said, "King Solomon had the right idea about these things. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do', Solomon said, 'do thy damndest'."

Mother called me inside. "Whose mackintosh is that?" she asked anxiously. "Katie's torn a hole in the back."

I heard Father saying contentedly on the piazza, "I like plenty of ice."

—*Life with Father*



Saturday Evening Post

PRIVATE BREGER

A popular wartime character. His creator is serving in the U.S. Army.

MILT GROSS

An anthology of American humour would not be complete without a page or two in the dialect of New York's East side. There are several examples to choose from. Arthur Kober's stories of life in the Bronx have gained him a good reputation in the U.S.A., and Milt Gross rather more fancifully writes fairy tales for his "Nize Baby", a child who needs, like children everywhere, a helpful commentary at meal-times. Many American slang words like "mazuma" (money) are of Yiddish origin, and at one time the Yiddish idiom in humour was very popular on the New York stage. It's interesting to compare the phraseology of Milt Gross's fable with Roark Bradford's Negro tale, and Ross's Mr. Kaplan.

FERRY-TAIL FROM KEENG MITAS FOR NIZE BABY

Oohoo, nize baby, itt opp all de Cheeken Zoop so mamma'll gonna tell you a Ferry-Tail from Keeng Mitas. Wance oppon a time was a werry, werry reech Keeng from de name from Keeng Mitas. Sotch a welth wot he hed!—wot it would make J. P. Morgan witt Hanry Fudd witt John D. Rockefeller dey should look like puppers. (Nize baby, take anodder spoon cheeken zoop—)

So instat from bing setisfite und contempted—he becrutched yat averbody helse wot dey possassed, und he was only trying how he could incriss yat wot he had (mmmm-dot griddy ting). So a whole time he was hudding opp de moneh und glutting yat from it like a miser. So wan day he was wukking opp und don in de godden so he was tinking so, “Hm—wot could I do dot I should hev it ivvin more yat from wot I got?” (mmm-dot salfish critchure). So he was interropted by a leedle Ferry wot it was stending in de front from him witt a Megic Want.

So de Ferry sad, “You Keeng Mitas? ? ?”

So de Keeng sad, “So wot is? ?”

So de Ferry sad, “I’m a Ferry wot I could grent you wot annyting wot you’ll weesh so’ll be foolfeeled de weesh! ! !” So de Keeng sad, “Wot kind bunco-steerage game you call dees, ha? You got maybe some goot-for-notting Hoil Stocks wot you want to sell it, ha, maybe? Odder a petent carpet-swipper, odder maybe a phony Gold mine yat, hal Try batter by Old Keeng Cole, not by me—Goot hefternoon! !”

So de Ferry sad, “Hm—you a werry septical poison, ha? Soppose wot you geeve me a hopportunity I should conweence you?”

So de Keeng sad, “Ho K. I weesh wot averyting wot I toch it, it should toin into gold.”

So he was holding in de hand a spectre, so de Ferry gave

him a tree times a tep witt de megic want—so he gave a look—so it was by him a solit gold spectre in de hand! !—Noo, noo!—So don't esk!!!

So de Keeng was dencing witt jomping witt lipping witt bonding witt prencing from joy. You should see wot he was deshing hitter witt titter—opp witt don, high witt low—beck witt futt, to witt frau— wot he was touching averyting on wheech he put on de hends. So his Wessel sad, "Is goot now?" So de Keeng sad, "Yeh, is good bot look a hincome-tax I'll gonna have und'll be mine lock yat wot I'll gat maybe tomorrow roommatezum in de hends". (MMMmmm—dot apparitious ting.)

So it came gredually deener-time so de Keeng was werry hongry so he set don he should itt opp a hoyster. So so soon wot he toched de hoyster it became solit gold!! So he said, "Hm—Wott's dees? ?" So he tried he should ketch in queek a potato in de mout no one should see, so so soon wot he stodded he should chew it, it became solit gold wot it broke him two teet witt a cron witt a heff from de breedge—woik yat hesites wot it was werry hot so it made him yat a bleesters on de tong!!

So he sad—"Hm!—Is a seerous preposition. It simms wot I'll have to employ stragedy". So he sad to de Wessel, "I'll gonna stedn witt de mout open—So you'll put in a bean-shooter a hepple, wot you'll shoot it, it should go in mine mout wot I'll swallow it queeck it shouldn't toch me". So de Wessel compiled gredually witt de requast, bot he was a werry poor mox-man, so instat from de Keeng's mout, it went in de had, wot it became immiditly gold wot it gave him sotch a knock wot he had almost conclusion from de brain.

So was a werry cricketal situation—wot de Keeng sad, "Hm, so it rimains wot I'll gonna hev to leeve maybe a whole life on gold-feesh, Ha!!" So it was gredually all kind from troubles!! It came de night so he stodded in he should ondrass so it was dere by him a pair from 18 carrot Bivvy Dizz wot de wessels had to ondrass him yat witt a can-uppener. So one day he was wukking opp witt don so it came ronning over to

heem his leedle dudder—Hm, deed she was a switt child!! So he was so epsom minded, dot dope, wot he put on her head de hend he should soch her so she became solit gold. Yi yi yi yi—So you should see a griff from a remuss wot it was by de Keeng—mmm!!! Deed he was sowry!!! witt meeserable witt don-hotted—witt rependant—wot he was wipping beeterly.

So it gredually appeared in de front from him de Ferry witt de Megic Want so he sad, "Goot Monnink, Keeng, How is by you de Gold Rosh???" So de Keeng gave sotch a grun from meesery wot it toched de Ferry's hott—so he sad, "You'll gonna be steengy witt gridy witt salfish anny more?"

So de Keeng sad, "NO".

"You'll gonna dunnate maybe itch year something to de Meelk Fond?"

"Yeh."

"Wid de Selwation Ommy?"

"Yeh."

"Widd de Uffan's Home?"

"Yeh."

"So you'll gonna refumm, ha?"

"Yeh."

"In odder woids you'll gonna be from now on a deeference indiwijial halltogadder?"

"Cruss mine hott!"

So de Ferry gave him tree times a tep witt de Megic Want so dere it was stending in de front from him de leddle dudder jost like new, wot dey leeved heppily hever hefter.

(Hm—Sotch a dollink baby—ate opp all de cheeken Zoopl)

—*Nize Baby*

JAMES THURBER

James Thurber hails from Columbus, Ohio—though “hails” is really too forceful a word for one who always employs an undertone. He is an expert at debunking, but does not delight in this calling. He appeals to our sense of the ridiculous, at the same time reminding us of the narrow dividing line between the sublime, the ridiculous, and the downright unhappy. Two distinct themes run through his work as writer and artist: unwilling acceptance of the ascendancy of women and deep respect for the canine world. Don’t love me, love my dogs is his motto.

The drawings defy analysis. They are well-loved by famous artists, and yet apparently a little child could draw them. In some uncanny way Thurber can represent all shades of despair, asininity and bewilderment. With E. B. White, his only biographer (and that biography merely a brief and poignant sketch) Thurber wrote IS SEX NECESSARY? He gave an account of early days in the Thurber household (MY LIFE AND HARD TIMES) but readers should take their pinch of salt along when they read about the Night the Ghost Got In. It is early Thurber, but has the authentic hollow ring.

I believe myself that when James was young he read something nasty in the woodshed. Perhaps it was one of those gruesome, stories of the Civil War by Ambrose Bierce. He came from Ohio too.

THE NIGHT THE GHOST GOT IN

The ghost that got into our house on the night of November 17th, 1915, raised such a hullabaloo of misunderstandings that I am sorry I didn't just let it keep on walking, and go to bed. Its advent caused my mother to throw a shoe through a window of the house next door and ended up with my grandfather shooting a patrolman. I am sorry, therefore, as I have said, that I ever paid any attention to the footsteps.

They began about a quarter past one o'clock in the morning, a rhythmic, quick-cadenced walking around the dining-room table. My mother was asleep in one room upstairs, my brother Herman in another; grandfather was in the attic, in the old walnut bed which, as you will remember, once fell on my father. I had just stepped out of the bathtub and was busily rubbing myself with a towel when I heard the steps. They were the steps of a man walking rapidly around the dining-room table downstairs. The light from the bathroom shone down the back steps, which dropped directly into the dining-room; I could see the faint shine of plates on the plate-rail; I couldn't see the table. The steps kept going round and round the table; at regular intervals a board creaked, when it was trod upon. I supposed at first that it was my father or my brother Roy, who had gone to Indianapolis but were expected home at any time. I suspected next that it was a burglar. It did not enter my mind until later that it was a ghost.

After the walking had gone on for perhaps three minutes, I tiptoed to Herman's room. "Psst!" I hissed, in the dark, shaking him. "Awp", he said, in the low, hopeless tone of a despondent beagle—he always half suspected that something would "get him" in the night. I told him who I was. "There's something downstairs!" I said. He got up and followed me to the head of the back staircase. We listened together. There was no sound. The steps had ceased. Herman looked at me in



“He always half suspected something would ‘get him’ in the night.”

some alarm: I had only the bath towel around my waist. He wanted to go back to bed, but I gripped his arm. "There's something down there!" I said. Instantly the steps began again, circled the dining-room table like a man running, and started up the stairs towards us, heavily, two at a time. The light still shone palely down the stairs: we saw nothing coming; we only heard the steps. Herman rushed to his room and slammed the door. I slammed shut the door at the stairs top and held my knee against it. After a long minute, I slowly opened it again. There was nothing there. There was no sound. None of us ever heard the ghost again.

The slamming of the doors had aroused mother: she peered out of her room. "What on earth are you boys doing?" she demanded. Herman ventured out of his room. "Nothing", he said gruffly, but he was, in colour, a light green. "What was all that running around downstairs?" said mother. So she had heard the steps, too! We just looked at her. "Burglars!" she shouted, intuitively. I tried to quiet her by starting lightly downstairs.

"Come on, Herman", I said.

"I'll stay with mother", he said. "She's all excited."

I stepped back on to the landing.

"Don't either of you go a step", said mother. "We'll call the police." Since the phone was downstairs, I didn't see how we were going to call the police—nor did I want the police—but mother made one of her quick, incomparable decisions. She flung up a window of her bedroom which faced the bedroom windows of the house of a neighbour, picked up a shoe, and whammed it through a pane of glass across the narrow space that separated the two houses. Glass tinkled into the bedroom occupied by a retired engraver named Bodwell and his wife. Bodwell had been for some years in rather a bad way and was subject to mild "attacks". Most everybody we knew or lived near had *some* kind of attacks.

It was now about two o'clock of a moonless night; clouds hung black and low. Bodwell was at the window in a minute,

shouting, frothing a little, shaking his fist. "We'll sell the house and go back to Peoria", we could hear Mrs. Bodwell saying. It was some time before mother "got through" to Bodwell. "Burglars!" she shouted. "Burglars in the house!" Herman and I hadn't dared to tell her that it was not burglars but ghosts, for she was even more afraid of ghosts than of burglars. Bodwell at first thought that she meant there were burglars in his house, but finally he quieted down and called the police for us over an extension phone by his bed. After he had disappeared from the window, mother suddenly made as if to throw another shoe, not because there was further need of it but, as she later explained, because the thrill of heaving a shoe through a window glass had enormously taken her fancy. I prevented her.

The police were on hand in a commendably short time: a Ford sedan full of them, two on motorcycles, and a patrol wagon with about eight in it and a few reporters. They began banging at our front door. Flashlights shot streaks of gleam up and down the walls, across the yard, down the walk between our house and Bodwell's. "Open up!" cried a hoarse voice "We're men from Headquarters!" I wanted to go down and let them in, since there they were, but mother wouldn't hear of it. "You haven't a stitch on", she pointed out. "You'd catch your death." I wound the towel around me again. Finally the cops put their shoulders to our big heavy front door with its thick bevelled glass and broke it in: I could hear a rending of wood and a splash of glass on the floor of the hall. Their lights played all over the living-room and criss-crossed nervously in the dining-room, stabbed into hallways, shot up the front stairs and finally up the back. They caught me standing in my towel at the top. A heavy policeman bounded up the steps. "Who are you?" he demanded. "I live here", I said. "Well, whattsa matta, ya hot?" he asked. It was, as a matter of fact, cold; I went to my room and pulled on some trousers. On my way out, a cop stuck a gun into my ribs. "Whatta you doin' here?" he demanded. "I live here", I said.



"Police were all over the place"

The officer in charge reported to mother. "No sign of nobody, lady", he said. "Musta got away—whatt'd he look, like?" "There were two or three of them", mother said, "whooping and carrying on and slamming doors." "Funny" said the cop. "All ya windows and doors was locked on the inside tight asa tick."

Downstairs, we could hear the tramping of the other police. Police were all over the place; doors were yanked open, drawers were yanked open, windows were shot up and pulled down, furniture fell with dull thumps. A half-dozen policemen emerged out of the darkness of the front hallway upstairs. They began to ransack the floor: pulled beds away from walls tore clothes off hooks in the closets, pulled suitcases and boxes off shelves. One of them found an old zither that Roy had won in a pool tournament. "Looky here, Joe", he said, strumming it with a big paw. The cop named Joe took it and turned it over. "What is it?" he asked me. "It's an old zither our guinea pig used to sleep on", I said. It was true that a pet guinea pig we once had would never sleep anywhere except on the zither, but I should never have said so. Joe and the other cop looked at me a long time. They put the zither back on a shelf.

"No sign o' nothing", said the cop who had first spoken to mother. "This guy", he explained to the others, jerking a thumb at me, "was nekked. The lady seems historical." They all nodded, but said nothing; just looked at me. In the small silence we all heard a creaking in the attic. Grandfather was turning over in bed. "What's 'at?" snapped Joe. Five or six cops sprang for the attic door before I could intervene or explain. I realized that it would be bad if they burst in on grandfather unannounced, or even announced. He was going through a phase in which he believed that General Meade's men, under steady hammering by Stonewall Jackson, were beginning to retreat and even desert.

When I got to the attic, things were pretty confused. Grandfather had evidently jumped to the conclusion that the police were deserters from Meade's army, trying to hide away in his

attic. He bounded out of bed wearing a long flannel nightgown over long woollen underwear, a nightcap, and a leather jacket around his chest. The cops must have realized at once that the indignant white-haired old man belonged in the house, but they had no chance to say so. "Back ye cowardly dogs!" roared grandfather. "Back t' the lines, ye goddam lily-livered cattle!" With that, he fetched the officer who found the zither a flat-handed smack alongside his head that sent him sprawling. The others beat a retreat, but not fast enough; grandfather grabbed Zither's gun from its holster and let fly. The report seemed to crack the rafters; smoke filled the attic. A cop cursed and shot his hand to his shoulder. Somehow, we all finally got downstairs again and locked the door against the old gentleman. He fired once or twice more in the darkness and then went back to bed. "That was grandfather", I explained to Joe, out of breath. "He thinks you're deserters." "I'll say he does", said Joe.

The cops were reluctant to leave without getting their hands on somebody besides grandfather; the night had been distinctly a defeat for them. Furthermore, they obviously didn't like the "layout"; something looked—and I can see their viewpoint—phony. They began to poke into things again. A reporter, a thin-faced, wispy man, came up to me. I had put on one of mother's blouses, not being able to find anything else. The reporter looked at me with mingled suspicion and interest. "Just what the hell is the real lowdown here, Bud?" he asked. I decided to be frank with him. "We had ghosts", I said. He gazed at me a long time as if I were a slot machine into which he had, without results, dropped a nickel. Then he walked away. The cops followed him, the one grandfather shot holding his now-bandaged arm, cursing and blaspheming. "I'm gonna get my gun back from that old bird", said the zither-cop. "Yeh", said Joe. "You—and who else?" I told them I would bring it to the station house the next day.

"What was the matter with that one policeman?" mother asked, after they had gone. "Grandfather shot him", I said.

"What for?" she demanded. I told her he was a deserter. "Of all things!" said mother. "He was such a nice-looking young man."

Grandfather was fresh as a daisy and full of jokes at breakfast next morning. We thought at first he had forgotten all about what had happened, but he hadn't. Over his third cup of coffee, he glared at Herman and me. "What was the idee of all them cops tarryhootin' round the house last night?" he demanded. He had us there.

—*My Life and Hard Times*

DOROTHY PARKER

This witty New York lady is famous in the United States for her sardonic bon mots. Yes, she is the hostess who, after speeding a parting guest, murmured "That woman speaks eighteen languages and can't say No in any of them". She it was who, in an inspired moment of dramatic criticism, described a performance by Katherine Hepburn as running the gamut of the emotions from A to B. During the Civil War in Spain she worked as a newspaper correspondent, and has more recently been engaged on film scenarios with her husband Alan Campbell.

Dorothy Parker has published plenty of short stories as well as a volume of collected poetry, Not So Deep as a Well. Her poems are frequently sentimental in the way Americans like sentiment—a spray of orchids in a cellophane box. But there is usually a wry greeting on the card which accompanies the gift. I prefer Dorothy Parker in her deadlier-than-the-male moments. Consider, for instance, the world of truth behind her trifle on Girls Who Wear Glasses.

"An odd blend of Little Nell and Lady Macbeth", says Alexander Woolcott, summing up his favourite poetess.

TOMBSTONES IN THE STARLIGHT

I. THE MINOR POET

His little trills and chirpings were his best.
No music like the nightingale's was born
Within his throat; but he, too, laid his breast
Upon a thorn.

II. THE PRETTY LADY

She hated bleak and wintry things alone.
All that was warm and quick, she loved too well—
A light, a flame, a heart against her own;
It is for ever bitter cold, in Hell.

III. THE VERY RICH MAN

He'd have the best, and that was none too good;
No barrier could hold, before his terms.
He lies below, correct in cypress wood,
And entertains the most exclusive worms.

IV. THE FISHERWOMAN

The man she had was kind and clean
And well enough for every day,
But, oh, dear friends, you should have seen
The one that got away!

V. THE CRUSADER

Arrived in Heaven, when his sands were run,
He seized a quill, and sat him down to tell
The local press that something should be done
About that noisy nuisance, Gabriel.

VI. THE ACTRESS

Her name, cut clear upon this marble cross,
Shines, as it shone when she was still on earth;
While tenderly the mild, agreeable moss
Obscures the figures of her date of birth.

MEN

They hail you as their morning star
Because you are the way you are.
If you return the sentiment,
They'll try to make you different;
And once they have you, safe and sound,
They want to change you all around.
Your moods and ways they put a curse on;
They'd make of you another person.
They cannot let you go your gait;
They influence and educate.
They'd alter all that they admired.
They make me sick, they make me tired.

RESUME

Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.

NEWS ITEM

Men seldom make passes
At girls who wear glasses.

ROBERT BENCHLEY

Who is that vague fellow we see drifting in and out of Hollywood comedies, patting beautiful women on the shoulder in absent-minded sympathy? It is Robert Charles Benchley, Harvard graduate, dramatic critic, champion of the ordinary, fallible man struggling to cope with the complexities of civilized life.

At one time Benchley, associated in a notable literary partnership with Dorothy Parker, shared, so Alexander Woolcott tells us, a microscopic office in the crumbly old building which still houses the Metropolitan Opera. He is what the Americans call "cagey"—unwilling to commit himself, undemonstrative.

MY TEN YEARS IN A QUANDARY is probably the best known Benchley book, but there are several others. His new offering, INSIDE BENCHLEY, is eagerly awaited by English admirers. He is a skilful parodist and can imitate a Victorian style to perfection.

Benchley and Thurber have a fellow-feeling. Both rebel against the technocrats, the Babbitts and the worshippers of gadgets, a salutary rebellion in the streamlined, chromium-plated pre-war American mode of existence. In LA PRESSE PERVERSE, the charming period-piece which follows, we have a glimpse of Benchley on the Continent. It will bring back holiday memories to many.

LA PRESSE PERVERSE

PARIS, 1929.

In reading French newspapers there is always one consolation: no matter how little of the meaning you are able to get, you aren't missing a thing. News is the last thing a French editor worries about. Even when he finds himself saddled with a real news-story, he doesn't know what to do with it, and will just as likely as not run it on page 7 among the *Petites Annonces*. He can take the story of an Atlantic flight or a cabinet crisis and undress it until it looks like something in the Special Westchester Section of the *Sunday Times*. There is always plenty to read in a French newspaper, but it doesn't make any difference whether you read it or not.

The attitude of the French press towards news is shown by the fact that most French papers run the latest dispatches on the third page under a vague departmental heading like "*Dernière Heure*" or "*Dernières Nouvelles*." The front page they save for their essays.

The left-hand column of the front page is usually given over to a red-hot story called something like: "Molière During the Middle Period of his Productivity". The right-hand column is probably a signed outburst by the owner of the paper urging the restoration of the Bourbons or calling attention to the drought in what the French persist in calling "*Tchécoslovaquie*". In the middle of the front page the eager reader may devour biographical sketches of the bicyclists who are engaging in the "*Tour de France*" and who are now just passing through Toulon. And inside, on page 3, all nestled together in little two-line dispatches, will be the brief announcements that China is on fire and that a tunnel has been found already built under the English Channel.

All summer *Le Matin* has been giving over the two right-hand columns of its front page to a series called "My Fishing

Trip in Newfoundland''. This has been illustrated copiously each day with photographs taken by the author, reproduced by means of cuts such as only French newspaper-engravers can make, presumably etched on pieces of bread. The date line on the most recent instalment was April 30. (I read the first two or three labouring under a slight misapprehension owing to the word for "to fish" being the same as the word for "to sin" and hoping that someone had gone to Newfoundland on a "campaign of sinning". You couldn't have told from the pictures whether it was sinning or fishing the author was engaged in.)

But no matter what page you look at in a French paper, you will find America mentioned. Even the front-page essays on Rousseau manage to slip in a paragraph or two taking a crack at Uncle Sam. The ratification of the *dettes* has, of course, been the chief topic of comment, and from *L'Humanité* to *L'Echo de Paris* the general attitude toward the United States is one of boiling rage. Practically the only general news-notes from America that French papers will play up are those dealing with torch-murders, flag-pole-sittings and the extreme heat. It was therefore, with considerable surprise that we saw a headline on the front page of *L'Echo de Paris* reading "*Un Grand Américain*", but it turned out to be a tribute to Theodore Roosevelt and a lament that America had strayed so far from his teachings.

As near as we could detect, there was no mention made in the French press of the recently disclosed fact that American tourists paid over twice as much money into France last year as France paid to the United States. Well, they can't be expected to print everything.

In one department, however, the newspapers here excel, and that is in the reporting of crime. They love it. Crimes of violence which American papers would hardly think worth a stick of type are written up by the French with a zest and thoroughness which makes of each one a special case in criminology. This is not because crimes are less frequent in

France than in America, for such papers as *Le Petit Marseillais*, after a perfunctory story on how the debts and the bicycle-tour are coming on, settle down each day to five or six solid pages of murder, arson, sex and robbery which apparently have been occupying the time of the entire citizenry the day before.

Even the most modest of crimes is treated in the Edgar Wallace manner, and it makes fascinating reading. Instead of, as in American accounts, beginning with the names and addresses of the policemen who discovered the crime, your French re-write man gets into a dressing-gown, lights his pipe and lets himself go like this (in rough translation):

"Toward 21 o'clock on the night of August 2, in the dark which resulted from there being no moon, Mme. Marie Plissy was walking toward her little shop in the rue Fourteenth-of-October when she suddenly found herself beaten down on the neck, falling dead at almost the same time. One is mystified."

Or even in more tantalizing fashion, under the mysterious headline "The Amorous Refusals", we are led on like this by *Le Petit Journal*: "André Gerome, 24 years, electrician, had known, for about four years, when he was a subaltern in the 2nd regiment of infantry, a young girl, Claudia Poncet, who had, at that epoch, 15 years and lived at the home of her parents, 15 rue Saint-Hippolyte".

Well, anything might be going to happen, you must admit. So we read on: "On his liberation, the young officer wished to become engaged and rendered a visit to the parents of the young Claudia who refused to give their consent. In order not to be disagreeable to her parents, Mlle. Poncet wished to romp (probably not the meaning of *rompre*, but good enough) and accepted a later rendezvous."

The rest of the story is really too sordid, but suffice it to say that when a M. Grafouillère came to knock on the door, he found that Mlle. Claudia had ceased to live owing to having received three balls in the chest and neck.

This will give you some idea of how things are going in sunny France and if one hasn't time to read *all* the stories of sudden

death and crime one may take that excellent paper, *L'Eclaireur de Nice et du Sud-Est*, and turn to page 3 where, under the general heading of *Nouvelles Diverses*, one finds, in summary, that at Aix an infant of five years drowns itself in a basin, at Lisieux a grandmother is killed with a hatchet for her money, that at Les Baux two lovers are shot by a jealous, and that in Orange a little boy sets fire to the mayor (possibly a slipshod translation, but that's what it looks like).

Of all French papers *Le Temps* seems to be the dullest, having a makeup such as would be effected by spreading two pages of the *Congressional Record* out side by side and doubling the length of their columns. This unexciting layout is not enhanced in the least by a department which fills the right-hand column under the dreary heading: "*La Vie à Londres*". There are no accounts of *crimes passionnels* in *Le Temps* and not even that concession to fresh air which most French newspapers make under the title "*La Vie Sportive*". If we were to recommend a paper *not* to buy for general reading it would be *Le Temps*, followed closely by *Le Figaro*. Compared with them our own *New York Times* is a tabloid. (Incidentally, our own *New York Times*, even ten days late, comes with all the excitement of the monthly instalments of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" when it was running serially in the *Strand Magazine*. We are sorry for anything we ever said disrespectfully of the *New York Times*.) Day in and day out *Le Matin* and *Le Quotidien* give the best imitation of real newspapers, although even they would deceive nobody. *Le Quotidien*, in the issue which has just come hot from the presses, bears a two-column scarehead on the front page biting out the following terse announcement, so that he who runs may read: "*La France Se Flattait Naguère de Posséder le Système Electoral le plus Large qui eût Jamais Existé. Va-t-elle Aujourd'hui Rester le Seul Pays ou les Femmes ne Votent pas?*" Not only do French headlines not tell you anything. They must ask questions.

We can not bring this scholarly summary of French journalism to a close, however, without commending the theatrical newspaper *Comœdia* as being the best of its kind we have ever seen. It appears daily, and, although it, too, devotes its front page to gentlemen's essays on classical subjects and the reproduction of a painting of some old master, its inside pages are as handy a guide to what is going on in the theatre world of Paris as newspaper skill could devise. Every theatre is listed, with address, telephone number, name of current attraction and the names of the cast. If it were not for this department we should never have known that a cinema called "*Le Chanteur de Jazz*" with "*la grande vedette du film parlant Al Jolson*" is playing at the Aubert-Palace, or that at the Casino de Paris one is able to see "*Les 16 Smart Boys*".

LEONARD Q. ROSS

Now that embattled Britain is so full of our Continental Allies, struggling to master our complex language, we are beginning to realize how great must be the linguistic problems in the United States, home of immigrants from so many nations.

Immigrant dialect in America has a long tradition. One of the most famous nineteenth century American poems, Charles Follen Adams's "Yawcob Strauss," used the half-German dialect of Pennsylvania.

*" I haf von funny leedle poy
Vot gomes schust to mine knee,
Der queerest schap, der greatest rogue
As efer you dit see. . . ."*

Leonard Ross's Hyman Kaplan is the modern equivalent. This genial, painstaking member of Mr. Parkhill's class (American Night Preparatory School for Adults—Preparation for Naturalization) is not someone merely to be laughed at, though his tussles with the language are highly comic. He is thrilled at the prospect of becoming an American citizen, and honours American Presidents and writers, even though he refers to them by such names as Abram Lincohen, Judge Vashington, Mocktvain and Relfvaldo Emerson. He writes his name lovingly with asterisks between the letters.

His creator first introduced him to this country in THE EDUCATION OF HYMAN KAPLAN. Another of Ross's books, THE STRANGEST PLACES, gives an account of odd dives and juke halls in New York.

MR. K*A*P*L*A*N THE MAGNIFICENT

Mr. Parkhill had decided that perhaps it might be wise for the class to attempt more *practical* exercises. On a happy thought, he had taken up the subject of letter-writing. He had lectured the students on the general structure of the personal letter: shown them where to put the address, city, date; explained the salutation; talked about the body of the letter; described the final greeting. And now the fruits of Mr. Parkhill's labours were being demonstrated. Five students had written the assignment, "A Letter to a Friend", on the black board.

On the whole Mr. Parkhill was satisfied. Miss Mitnick had a straightforward and accurate letter—as might be expected—inviting her friend Sylvia to a surprise party. Mr. Norman Bloom had written to someone named Fishbein, describing an excitin day at Coney Island. Miss Rochelle Goldberg had told "Molly" about a "bos ride on a bos on 5 av". Mrs. Moskowitz, simple soul, had indulged her fantasies by pretending she was on vacation in "Miame, Floridal", and had written her husband Oscar to be sure "the pussy should get each morning milk". (Apppparently Mrs. Moskowitz was deeply attached to "the pussy", for she merely repeated the admonition in several ways all through her epistle, leaving no room for comment on the beauties of "Miame, Floridal".) And Mr. Hyman Kaplan—Mr. Parkhill frowned as he examined the last letter written on the blackboard.

"It's to mine brodder in Varsaw", said Mr. Kaplan, smiling in happy anticipation.

Mr. Parkhill nodded, rather absently; his eyes were fixed on the board.

"Maybe it would be easier I should readink de ladder alod", suggested Mr. Kaplan delicately.

LADDER TO MINE
BRODDER

HELLO MAX!!!



"I should be telling about mine progriss. In school I am fine. Making som mistakes, netcheral."

"‘*Letter*’, Mr. Kaplan", said Mr. Parkhill, ever the pedagogue. "Not ‘*ladder*.’"

"Maybe I should readink de *latter*?" repeated Mr. Kaplan.

"Er—no—no", said Mr. Parkhill hastily. "We—er—we haven't much time left this evening. It is getting late." He tried to put it as gently as possible, knowing what this harsh deprivation might mean to Mr. Kaplan's soul.

Mr. Kaplan sighed philosophically, bowing to the tyranny of time.

"The class will study the letter for a few minutes, please", said Mr. Parkhill. "Then I shall call for corrections."

The class fell into that half-stupor which indicated concentration. Miss Mitnick studied the blackboard with a determined glint in her eye. Mr. Pinsky stared at Mr. Kaplan's letter with a critical air, saying "Tchk! Tchk!" several times quite professionally. Mrs. Moskowitz gazed ceilingward with an exhausted expression. Apparently the vicarious excitements of the class session had been too much for poor Mrs. Moskowitz: an invitation to a surprise party, a thrilling day at Coney Island, a Fifth Avenue bus ride, and her own trip to Florida. That was quite a night for Mrs. Moskowitz.

And Mr. Kaplan sat with his joyous smile unmarred, a study in obvious pride and simulated modesty, like a god to whom mortals were paying homage. First he watched the faces of the students as they wrestled with his handiwork, and found them pleasing. Then he concentrated his gaze on Mr. Parkhill. He saw anxious little lines creep around Mr. Parkhill's eyes as he read that letter; then a frown—a strange frown, bewildered and incredulous; then a nervous clearing of the throat. Any other student might have been plunged into melancholy by these dark omens, but they only added a transcendental quality to Mr. Kaplan's smile.

This was the letter Mr. Kaplan had written:

459 E 3 Str.
N.Y.
New York
Octo. 10

HELLO MAX!!!

I should be telling about mine progriss. In school I am fine. Making som mistakes, netcheral. Also however doing the hardest xrcises, like the best students the same. Som students is Mitnick, Blum, Moskowitz—no relation Moskowitz in Warsaw. Max! You should absolutel coming to N.Y. and belonging in mine school!

It was at this point, visualizing too vividly *another* Mr. Kaplan in the class, that anxious little lines had crept around Mr. Parkhill's eyes.

Do you feeling fine? I suppose. Is all ok? You should begin right now learning about ok. Here you got to say ok. all the time. ok the wether, ok the potatos, ok the prazident Roosevelt.

At this point the frown—a strange frown, bewildered and incredulous—had marched on to Mr. Parkhill's face.

How is darling Fanny? Long should she leave. So long.

With all kinds entusiasm

Your animated brother

H*Y*M*I*E

Mr. Kaplan simply could not resist the æsthetic impulse to embellish his signature with those stars; they had almost become an integral part of the name itself.

Mr. Parkhill cleared his throat. He felt vaguely distressed.

"Has everyone finished reading?" he asked. Heads nodded in half-hearted assent. "Well, let us begin. Corrections, please."

Mrs. Tomasic's hand went up. "Should be 'N.Y.' after 'New York' and 'New York' should be on top of."

"Correct", said Mr. Parkhill, explaining the difference and making the change on the board.

"In all places is 'mine' wrong", said Mr. Feigenbaum. "It should be 'my.'"

Mr. Parkhill nodded, happy that some one had caught that most common of Mr. Kaplan's errors.

The onslaught went on: the spelling of words, the abbreviation of "October" and "street", the tenses of the verbs.

"Mr. Kaplan got so many mistakes", began Mr. Bloom with hauteur. Mr. Bloom was still annoyed because Mr. Kaplan had rashly offered to correct the spelling of Coney Island, in Mr. Bloom's letter to "'Corney Island,' like is pernonced". He spelled wrong 'progress', 'some', 'natural'. He means Long should she *live*'—not 'Long should she *leave*'. That means going away. He even spelled wrong my name!" It was clear from Mr. Bloom's indignant tone that this was by far the most serious of Mr. Kaplan's many errors. "Is double 'o', not 'u'. I ain't like *som* Blooms!"

With this jealous defence of the honour of the House of Bloom, Mr. Bloom looked at Mr. Kaplan coolly. If he had thought to see Mr. Kaplan chagrined by the barrage of corrections he did not know the real mettle of the man. Mr. Kaplan was beaming with delight.

"Honist to Gott, Bloom", said Mr. Kaplan with admiration, "you soitinly improvink in your English to seeink all dese mistakes!"

There was a fine charity in this accolade. It had, however, the subtle purpose of shifting attention from Mr. Kaplan's errors to Mr. Bloom's progress.

Mr. Bloom did not know whether to be pleased or suspicious whether this was a glowing tribute or the most insidious irony.

"Thenks, Kaplan", he said finally, acknowledging the compliment with a nod, and considered the injuries of "Corney Island" and "Blum" expiated.

"I see more mistakes", said Miss Mitnick, intruding an unwelcome note into the happy Kaplan-Bloom rapport. Mr. Kaplan's eyes gleamed when he heard Miss Mitnick's voice. Here was a foe of a calibre quite different from that of Norman Bloom. "'Absolutel' should be 'absolutely.' 'Potatoes' has an 'e.' 'Prazident' is wrong; it should be 'e' and 's' and a capital." Miss Mitnick went on and on making corrections. Mr. Parkhill transcribed them to the board as swiftly as he could, until his wrists began to ache. "'ok' is wrong, should be 'O.K.'—with *capitals* and *periods*—because it's abbreviation." All through the Mitnick attack Mr. Kaplan sat quiet, alert but smiling. There was a supreme confidence in that smile, as if he were waiting for some secret opportunity to send the whole structure that Miss Mitnick was rearing so carefully crashing down upon her head. Miss Mitnick rushed on to the abyss.

"Last", she said, slowing up to emphasize the blow, "*three* exclamation points after 'Max' is wrong. Too many."

"Aha!" cried Mr. Kaplan. It was The Opportunity. "Pod-den me, Mitnick. De odder corractions you makink is fine, foist-cless—even Hau Kay, an' I minn Hau Kay mit *capitals* an' *periods*", he added sententiously. "But batter takink back abot de tree haxclimation points!"

Miss Mitnick blushed, looking to Mr. Parkhill for succour.

"Mr. Kaplan", said Mr. Parkhill with caution, sensing some hidden logic in Mr. Kaplan's tone. "A colon is the proper punctuation for the salutation, or a comma. If you *must* use an—er—exclamation point"—he was guarding himself on all fronts—"then, as Miss Mitnick says, *three* are too many."

"For de vay *I'm* fillink abot mine *brodder*?" asked Mr. Kaplan promptly. In that question, sublime in its simplicity, Mr. Kaplan inferentially accused his detractor of (1) familial ingratitude, (2) trying to come between the strong love of two brothers.

"But, Kaplan", broke in Mr. Bloom, jumping into the fray on the side of Miss Mitnick, "*three* exclama——"

"Also he's mine *fawourite* brodder!" said Mr. Kaplan. "For mine *fawourite* brodder you eskink *yun—leette—haxclimation point?*" It was an invincible position. "Ha! Dat I give to *strengers!*"

Mr. Bloom retired from the field, annihilated. One could hardly expect a man of Mr. Kaplan's exquisite sensitivity to give equal deference and love to *strangers* and his favourite brother. Mr. Parkhill paused to mobilize his forces.

"How's about 'entusiasm'?" said Miss Mitnick, determined to recover face. "Is spelled wrong—should be 'th.' And 'With all kinds enthusiasm' is bad for ending a letter."

"Aha!" Mr. Kaplan gave his battle call again. "Maybe *is de* spallink wronk. But not *de* vay I'm *usink* 'antusiasm', be-cawss"—he injected a trenchant quality into his voice to let the class get the deepest meaning of his next remark—"becawss *I* write to *mine* brodder in Varsaw *mit real antusiasm!*"

The implication was clear: Miss Mitnick was one of those who, corrupted by the gaudy whirl of the New World, let her brothers starve, indifferently, overseas.

Miss Mitnick bit her lip. Mr. Parkhill, trying to look judicious, avoided her eyes.

"Well", began Miss Mitnick yet a third time, desperately, "'animated' is wrong. 'Your *animated* brother, Hymie?' *That's* wrong."

She looked at Mr. Parkhill with a plea that was poignant. She dared not look at Mr. Kaplan, whose smile had advanced to a new dimension.

"Yes", said Mr. Parkhill. "'Animated' is quite out of place in the final greeting."

Mr. Kaplan sighed. "I looked op *de* void 'enimated' *spacial*. It's minnink 'full of life', no? Vell, I falt *planty* full of life ven I vas wridink *de* ladder."

Miss Mitnick dropped her eyes, the rout complete.

"Mr. Kaplan!" Mr. Parkhill was left to fight the good fight alone. "You may say 'She had an animated expression' or

'The music has an animated refrain'. But one doesn't say 'animated' about one's *self*."

The appeal to propriety proved successful. Mr. Kaplan confessed that perhaps he had overreached himself with "Your animated brother".

"Suppose we try another word", suggested Mr. Parkhill. "How about 'fond'? 'Your *fond* brother—er—Hyman?'" (He couldn't quite essay "Hymie.")

Mr. Kaplan half-closed his eyes, gazed into space, and meditated on this moot point. "'Fond', 'fond'," he whispered to himself. He was like a man who had retreated into a secret world, searching for his Muse. "'Your fond brodder, Hymie.'" He shook his head. "Podden me", he said apologetically. "It don' have de *fillink*."

"What about 'dear'?" offered Mr. Parkhill quickly. "'Your *dear* brother', and so on?"

Once more Mr. Kaplan went through the process of testing, judgment, and consultation with his evasive Muse. "'Dear', 'dear', 'Your dear brodder, Hymie.' Also no." He sighed. "'Dear,' it's too *common*."

"What about——"

"Aha!" cried Mr. Kaplan suddenly, as the Muse kissed him. His smile was as the sun. "I got him! Fine! Poifick! Soch a void!"

The class, to whom Mr. Kaplan had communicated some of his own excitement, waited breathlessly. Mr. Parkhill himself, it might be said, was possessed of a queer eagerness.

"Yes, Mr. Kaplan. What word would you suggest?"

"'Magnificent!'" cried Mr. Kaplan.

Admiration and silence fell upon the class like a benediction. "Your magnificent brother, Hymie." It was a *coup de maître*, no less. Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N the Magnificent.

As if in a trance, the beginners' grade waited for Mr. Parkhill's verdict.

And when Mr. Parkhill spoke, it was slowly, sadly, aware that he was breaking a magic spell. "N-no, Mr. Kaplan.

I'm afraid not. 'Magnificent' isn't really—er—appropriate."

The bell rang in the corridors, as if it had withheld its signal until the last possible moment. The class moved into life and toward the door. Mr. Norman Bloom went out with Mr. Kaplan. Mr. Parkhill could hear the last words of their conversation.

"Kaplan", said Mr. Bloom enviously, "*how* you fond soch a beautiful woid?"

"'Megnificent', megnificent'," Mr. Kaplan murmured to himself wistfully. "Achl Dat *was* a beautiful void, ha, Bloom?"

"Believe me!" said Mr. Bloom. "*How* you fond soch a woid?"

"By *dip* tinkin'", said Mr. Kaplan.

He strode out like a hero.

—*The Education of Hyman Kaplan*

OGDEN NASH

Those who like poetry of the mildly mad variety will enjoy Ogden Nash. Americans appreciate him partly because he parodies their own unique Julia Moore, the Sweet Singer of Michigan (1874-1920). Miss Moore wrote extremely bad verse without being aware of its defects. In fact, her poems were so bad that they seemed touched with genius. They ranged from elegies on deaths caused by yellow fever to occasional verse on the Grand Rapids Cricket Club. Mark Twain was one of the first to recognize the unconscious humour of such a situation.

Ogden Nash is fond of imitating the Sweet Singer's painfully long, unsymmetrical lines and her false rhymes, and adds surprising puns of his own. He, like Miss McGinley, rhymes "Autumn" with "bautumn", but in many places he's as clever a rhymester as W. S. Gilbert. He is a New York author, whose books of verse began with FREE WHEELING (1931) and have been collected in THE FACE IS FAMILIAR, from which the two following examples are taken. Ogden Nash is a poet to be approached warily, but has become an acquired taste for English palates.

CAT NAPS ARE TOO GOOD FOR CATS

Oh, early every afternoon
I like a temporary swoon.
I do not overeat at luncheon,
I do not broach the bowl or puncheon;
Yet the hour from two or three
Is always sleepy-time to me.

Bolt upright at my desk I sit,
My elbows digging into it,
My chin into my hands doth fit,
My careful fingers screen my eyes,
And all my work before me lies,
Which leads inquisitive passers-bys
Who glance my way and see me nod,
To think me wide awake, if odd.

I would not sell my daily swoon
For all the rubies in Rangoon.
What! sell my swoon? My lovely swoon?
Oh, many and many's the afternoon
I've scoured the woods with Daniel Boone,
And sipped a julep with Lorna Doone,
And Former Governor Ruby Laffoon.
I'll sell my soul before my swoon,
It's not for sale, my swoon's immune.

From two to three each afternoon
Mine are the Mountains of the Moon,
Mine a congenial silver spoon.
And I can lead a lost platoon
Or dive for pearls in a haunted lagoon,
Or guide a stratosphere balloon.

Oh, where the schooner schoons, I schoon,
I can talk lion, or baboon,
Or make a crooner cease to croon.
I like to swoon, for when I swoon
The universe is my macaroon.
Then blessings on thee, my afternoon torpor,
Thou makest a prince of a mental porpor.

FIRST FAMILIES, MOVE OVER !

Carry me back to Ole Virginny,
And there I'll meet a lot of people from New York,
There the Ole Marsa of the Hounds is from Smithtown or
Peapack or Millbrook,
And the mocking bird makes music in the sunshine accom-
panied by the rattling shaker and the popping cork.

All up and down the old plantation
Socialites are riding hell-for-leather like witches and war-
locks,
And there is only one thing that keeps the squirearchy from
being a genuine reproduction,
Which is that the peasantry's hair is kinky so they
haven't any forelocks so they can't tug their
forelocks.

In the evening by the bright light you can hear those
darkies singing,
How the white folks do enjoy it and call the attention
of their friends from Piping Rock to the natural
musical talent of the dusky proletariat.
You can hear those banjos ringing because the hands
have been ordered to exchange their saxophones
for banjos,

And they wish they were singing Lookie lookie lookie,
here comes Cookie, but their instructions are to
sing Swing Low Sweet Chariot.

Oh what is more beautiful and more Southern than a
Southern beauty from Philadelphia or Rumson,
And indeed where was Southern beauty before the
advent of Schiaparelli and Elizabeth Arden?
And what is more gracious than a hostess calling you
you-all in the singular and plural indiscriminately,
And what has more local colour than a lovely girl in
jodhpurs telling you about her gyarrden?

Oh the long happy days spent huntin' or shootin' or
fishin',
Or in any other sport provided it's lackin' in g's!
Oh the long happy evenings spent sniffing jasmine and
poring over the shiny new family Bible,
And figuring out that after all this is really your home
because great-grandmother Wilkins was a Filkins
and the Filkinses were related by marriage to the
Randolphs or the Lees!

So please somebody carry me back to Ole Virginny,
Where gentlemen are gentlemen and a lady is known by
the product she endorses,
Where the atmosphere is as Southern as an advertisement
for a medium-priced rye whiskey,
And where the Virginians from Virginia have to ride automo-
biles because the Virginians from Long Island are the
only ones who can afford to ride horses.

—*The Face Is Familiar*

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

This New York dramatic and literary critic had a genius for self-advertisement. Some of those who saw THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER as a play or film may not have realized that the egregious main character is based on Woollcott, and that on the American stage he acted the part of himself. This argues a genuine sense of humour, to say the least. Woollcott was also host to many of the American literati in his country home "Wit's End". We heard him broadcast from London a few months ago. Perhaps, too, you remember his entirely individual study of a critic in the Noel Coward Ben Hecht film THE SCOUNDREL some years back.

Alexander Humphries Woollcott began writing for the NEW YORKER, to which he contributed a distinguished series of dramatic criticism. He also commented wittily on his contemporaries, as you will see when you read his essay on Kathleen Norris, and kept a record of his travels in the Orient and the Soviet Union. He was pacing around Moscow in 1932, and his diary shows a remarkable appreciation of the Muscovites at a time when the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. were scarcely even on shouting terms. Woollcott is deliberately whimsical and encourages himself to elaborate on his little enthusiasms and personal crotchets, a trick he plays so well you forgive the occasional feeling that it is more style than substance. WHILE ROME BURNS has been his most popular book in this country. His sudden and tragic death will be felt by all who love good humour.

ENTRANCE FEE

This is the story of Cosette and the Saint-Cyrien, much as they tell it (and these many years have been telling it) in the smoky *popotes* of the French army. In the 'nineties, when one heard less ugly babel of alien tongues in the sidewalk cafés, the talk at the *apéritif* hour was sure to turn sooner or later on Cosette—Mlle. Cosette of the *Variétés*, who was regarded by common consent as the most desirable woman in France. She was no hedged-in royal courtesan, as her possessive fellow-citizens would point out with satisfaction, but a distributed du Barry, the *chère amie* of a republic.

Her origins were misty. Some said she had been born of fisher folk at Plonbazlanec on the Brittany coast. Others preferred the tale that she was the love-child of a famous actress by a very well-known king. In any case, she was now a national legend, and in her pre-eminence the still-bruised French people found in some curious way a balm for their wounded self-esteem. Her photographs, which usually showed her sitting piquantly on a café table, were cut from *L'Illustration* and pinned up in every barracks. Every French lad dreamed of her, and every right-minded French girl quite understood that her sweetheart was saying in effect: "Since I cannot hope to have Cosette, will you come to the river's edge at sundown?" Quite understood, and did not blame him.

Every one had seen the pictures of Cosette's tiny, vine-hung villa at Saint-Cloud, with its high garden wall and its twittering aviary. And even those for whom that wall was hopelessly high took morbid pride in a persistent detail of the legend which said that no man was ever a guest there for the night who could not bring five thousand francs with him. This was in the 'nineties, mind you, when francs were francs, and men—by a coincidence then more dependable—were men.

The peasant blend of charm and thrift in Cosette filled the

cadets at Saint-Cyr with a gentle melancholy. In their twilight hours of relaxation they talked it over, and all thought it a sorrowful thing that, so wretched is the soldier's pittance, not one of those who must some day direct the great *Revanche* would ever carry into battle a memory of the fairest woman in France. For what cadet could hope to raise five thousand francs? It was very sad. But, cried one of their number, his voice shaking, his eyes alight, there were a thousand students at Saint-Cyr, and not one among them so lacking in resource that he could not, if given time, manage to raise at least five francs.

That was how the Cosette Sweepstakes were started. There followed then all the anxious distraction of ways and means, with such Spartan exploits in self-denial, such Damon-and-Pythias borrowings, such flagrant letters of perjured appeal to unsuspecting aunts and godmothers, as Saint-Cyr had never known. But by the appointed time the last man had his, or somebody's, five francs.

The drawing of numbers was well under way when a perplexed instructor stumbled on the proceedings and reported his discovery to the Commandant. When the old General heard the story he was so profoundly moved that it was some time before he spoke.

"The lad who wins the lottery", he said at last, "will be the envy of his generation. But the lad who conceived the idea—ah, he, my friend, will some day be a Marshal of France!"

Then he fell to laughing at the thought of the starry-eyed youngster arriving at the stage door of the *Variétés* with nothing but his youth and his entrance fee. The innocent budget had made no provision for the trip to Paris, none for a carriage, a bouquet, perhaps a supper party. The commandant said that he would wish to meet this margin of contingency from his own fatherly pocket.

"There will be extras", he said. "Let the young rascal who wins be sent to me before he leaves for Paris."

It was a cadet from the Vendée who reported to the Com-

mandant next afternoon—very trim in his red breeches and blue tunic, his white gloves spotless, his white cockade jaunty, his heart in his mouth. The Commandant said no word to him but put a little purse of gold *Louis* in his hand, kissed him on both cheeks in benediction, and stood at his window, moist eyed and chuckling, to watch until the white cockade disappeared down the avenue of trees.

The sunlight, latticed by the *jalousies*, was making a gay pattern on Cosette's carpet the next morning when she sat up and meditated on the day which stretched ahead of her. Her little cadet was cradled in a sweet dreamless sleep, and it touched her rather to see how preposterously young he was. Indeed, it quite set her thinking of her early days and how she had come up in the world. Then she began speculating on *his* early days, realized with a pang that he was still in the midst of them, and suddenly grew puzzled. Being a woman of action she prodded him.

"Listen, my old one", she said, "how did a cadet at Saint-Cyr ever get hold of five thousand francs?"

Thus abruptly questioned, he lost his head and blurted out the tale of the sweepstakes. Perhaps he felt it could do no harm now, and anyway she listened so avidly, with such flattering little gasps of surprise and such sunny ripples of laughter, that he quite warmed to his story. When he came to the part about the Commandant, she rose and strode up and down, the lace of her peignoir fluttering behind her, tears in her violet eyes.

"Saint-Cyr has paid me the prettiest compliment I have ever known", she said, "and I am the proudest woman in France this day. But surely I must do my part. You shall go back and tell them all that Cosette is a woman of sentiment. When you are an old, old man in the Vendée you shall tell your grand-children that once in your youth you knew the dearest favours in France, and they cost you not a sou. Not a sou."

At that she hauled open the little drawer where he had seen her lock up the lottery receipts the night before.

"Here", she said, with a lovely gesture. "I give you back your money."

And she handed him his five francs.

A PORTRAIT OF KATHLEEN NORRIS

A portrait of Kathleen Norris? She had one painted when she was in France as a present to C. G. Norris, that other ink-stained wretch to whom she is married. On her way home with it, she had no sooner stepped off the gang-plank in New York than he was on the wire from California, calling up to ask what she had brought him.

Her answer was truthful, though misleading. "An old map", she said, "an old map I got in Paris". A painful pause testified to his lack of marked enthusiasm. "A valuable antique?" he asked hopefully. "Well", she parried, "I'm not having to pay any duty on it, so I guess the customs men think it looks more than a hundred years old."

But a portrait of Kathleen Norris in words? Whoever is hard enough to attempt one is bound to surprise and bewilder the vast multitude who know her only in her public appearances. Perhaps you have seen her standing, queenly and benevolent, on the platform before some breathless conglomeration of women's clubs. If so, you must have noticed how judiciously her outward aspect blends a happy approximation of Marie of Rumania, with just a dash of the late Louisa May Alcott. Wherefore you have said that here, if ever, was the ideal lady president of all the women's clubs in the world. But then you did not chance to see our Mrs. Morris on that night when she and I missed the entire first act of *The Black Crook* because we had become involved in a singularly bitter cribbage game with Madge Kennedy and Harold Ross in a Hoboken saloon.

And your first impression of her would need still further readjustment if you were to see her, as I have seen her, playing

croquet against Harpo Marx, torturing her anxious partner and infuriating her painstaking opponents by making each shot in a most lackadaisical manner, but, even so, managing never, by any chance, to miss the ball or wicket she was aiming at. There are one or two men in America who are as good croquet players as Kathleen Norris, but in the real clinches of this malignant sport, no woman can come anywhere near her.

Then those who know her only through the stories with which she keeps the presses humming really do not know her at all. As I am a reader who seldom attempts more than one novel a year, and Kathleen Norris is an author who seldom writes fewer than four, she is several up on me, and I therefore cannot pose as a final authority on her published works. But I do think it is safe to say that, in the blend of sentiment and romance which is her stock in trade, humour is not the conspicuous ingredient. And yet she herself is one of the most astonishing and delightful clowns of her day. When the fit is on her, her mind is so dazzlingly rapid and her thrust so strong that I would rather go back to my freshman year and be tossed in a blanket all over again than try a joust with Kathleen Norris.

Ask Frank Sullivan. One day in a recent winter that timorous little omadhaun was taking his constitutional when whom should he spy looking speculatively into a Fifth Avenue shop window but the slightly majestic figure of America's favourite author. It occurred to him that it might be fun to steal behind her and pinch her playfully. If ever in his life he was to acquire the memory of thus roguishly accosting a famous writer of wholesome fiction, here was his chance. He knew her slightly, admired her profoundly, and it was all, mind you, in the spirit of clean fun. It would, he thought, be a good joke on her. In this he was most grievously in error. He discovered that much as soon as he had obeyed the vagrant impulse.

Perhaps she had caught a glimpse of his reflection in the window and so was armed with a moment's time in which to

improvise her reprisal. Anyway, he had hardly touched her when she turned to him and in a ringing voice that could be heard above the hubbub of the avenue, she cried out:

"Not one penny. Not one penny more. No", she continued, with a rush that bore down any feeble attempt at interruption which occurred to his startled mind "you and your family have had all the money you'll ever get out of me. The back of my hand to you, Frank Sullivan."

To the warm interest of a jostling crowd that encircled them instanter, she went on with her denunciation. "It's useless for you to call me stingy. My cheque stubs are the best answer to that. Only last week I gave you a hundred dollars to buy medicine for your poor, sick wife. [Mr. Sullivan has no wife, sickly or robust.] Did she get a penny of it? Not she! No, you spent it on the drink, my lad. You guzzled it, Frank Sullivan, and they found you in the gutter."

The crowd was now multiplying rapidly, and Sullivan was dimly aware that its members were eyeing him with disfavour. Desperately he groped for some phrase that would let these hostile onlookers know that it was all just a great, big prank. But none came to him, and anyway, he could not have got a word in edgewise. For by this time she was getting her teeth into her performance. A great actress was lost to the stage when Kathleen Norris first put key to ribbon. She has a repertory of characters as varied as Ruth Draper's and, like the Margaret Anglin whom she used quite strikingly to resemble, she can turn on the tears as from a faucet. A freshet of them was now pouring down her cheeks. Her voice took on a piercing quality.

"I've given you everything I had", she cried, "and still you hound me!"

But Sullivan heard no more. Ingloriously defeated, he turned and fled, burrowing his way through the crowd which made a path for him as for a leper. By aid of the first taxi he could encounter, he asked only to put as much distance as he could between himself and that terrifying woman. Deeply

content, Mrs. Norris patted her hair back into place and went on with her shopping.

A word portrait of Kathleen Norris? I had been minded, you see, to attempt one, but the difficulty of the task abashes me and what you are reading here is offered only as some rough notes to guide the bolder hand which may eventually undertake it. The material is abundant enough. There is, of course, the background of that idyllic California childhood, followed by the story of the lean and lively years when the six Thompson youngsters were left fatherless and motherless within the space of a single month. From the huddled and anxious bivouac of their San Francisco flat, Kathleen, the eldest daughter, went forth to various jobs as book keeper, saleswoman, companion, school-teacher, librarian. She was substituting as the society editor of a San Francisco newspaper when she first encountered Charles Norris. The acquaintance began when she telephoned him to confirm the rumour of his engagement to someone else. It was she herself who eventually scotched that rumour. It was in 1909 that they got married and came to New York, rashly setting up housekeeping on the twenty-five dollars a week which was his salary on the staff of the *American Magazine*. I think it was the quality of the manuscripts she had to help him wade through which in time aroused her old but dormant impulse to be a writer herself.

To-day she is the darling of the editors. There are beetle-browed and intense statisticians who have figured out to a penny just how much money a magazine can afford to spend on acquiring a new subscriber, and since it has been reported by lynx-eyed experts that the name of Kathleen Norris printed on a magazine cover sends up its circulation by a hundred thousand copies, you may guess for yourself why her income as a writer to-day is larger, year in and year out, than that of any other author in the world.

I could not—and, indeed, would not—be precise in the matter, beyond venturing a guess that Mrs. Norris must make rather more in a year than the President of the United States

or I, and rather less, at present, than Greto Garbo. Therefore one need not ask why Kathleen Norris writes so many stories. What puzzles me most is *when* she writes them. But perhaps that is just because, for the most part, I have seen her only when they were giving one of their ghastly receptions at the Hotel Chatham, Charles Norris being lavish with cocktails (made, I think, from machine oil and hair tonic) and his good wife being officially merry and gracious, but not quite successful in concealing her wild inner wonder as to why, in her husband's opinion, the trade of being an author should involve assembling, in one airless suite, so *many* people she did not want to see at all.

While being trampled underfoot at such a gathering, I usually run into one old friend of theirs, who, now that I come to think of it, could do this portrait we have in mind better than anyone else. Her path first crossed theirs back in the days when Charles Norris was on the *American Magazine* and Kathleen, after she had put the baby to bed, cooked the dinner, and washed the dishes, used to help him read the manuscripts he would bring to the flat as homework. In one batch of two hundred feeble and floundering efforts, one story seemed alive and true. It was called "The Frog and the Puddle", and they decided that the *American* ought to go so far as to pay a hundred dollars for it. Easy come, easy go. That story was the maiden effort of a young Wisconsin newspaper woman named Edna Ferber. Now, whenever they visit New York, you are sure to find Mrs. Norris routing Miss Ferber out of her flossy seclusion. Once when she arrived at the Chatham she was baffled by the discovery that the big dreamer had moved to new quarters and retired behind the protection of a private telephone number. But baffled only for a day. Next morning there appeared in the personal column of *The Times*, a note running somewhat as follows:

EDNA F.—Am at the hotel and terrible worried. Charlie is on the drink again. Please call me up.

KATIE.

By noon, at least fifty people had broken through the old Ferber barricades with the news that the Norrises were at the Chatham.

I should like to read a Ferber sketch of Kathleen Norris, but before she attempts it, she should first visit the California ranch where the Norrises make their summer home. It is up in the mountains near Saratoga, and she does not know either of them if she has not seen them in that setting. When I think of it, I hear the click of croquet balls on a greensward fitted with electric projectors so that mere nightfall shall not cut short the delightful animosities of that game. I hear old Nevin tunes coming faintly through the redwood trees. I hear the gong which warns the swimmers in the pool that luncheon is ready—luncheon served in a sequoia grove, with Mrs. Norris brandishing a huge wooden spoon over the salad bowl, while two youngsters spear the chickens from the pot, another manages the succotash, another the iced tea. I hear them whispering over their plans for some knotty charades they intend to stage that evening. I see the unpretentious house and the row of guest cabins along the leafy ravine. I remember all the friendly lamplight in the windows on the night I drove away, and I know that nowhere in my wanderings around the world have I come upon any home which seemed to me so crowded with laughter and good works and loving-kindness.

Above all, I warn Miss Ferber that no sketch of Kathleen Norris will be ready to sign unless it has a chapter in it about Bill. Something less than twenty years ago, when Kathleen Norris was a writer whose name was just beginning to be one to conjure with on the news-stands, she came into the port of New York from Rio and went to work at the dismaying task of picking up the scattered pieces of her life. It had been broken by the death of her two little girls, and now her small son was an only child. She herself had been one of six uproarious children, so that a crowd was the very breath of her existence.

Rebecca West once said of Herbert Bayard Swope, when he

was editor of the lamented *New York World*, that he could not write a letter unless there were four people in the room, and to-day I doubt if Mrs. Norris could type out a really good chapter on her rickety portable if she did not know that on the stroke of noon, she would have to go downstairs and see about lunch for a half-dozen of the nieces and nephews with whom her home in California is always swarming. It was a such woman who met the greatest impoverishment of her life by going to Bellevue Hospital and demanding a foundling to take care of.

In those more haphazard days a woman obeying such an impulse did not have to run the gauntlet of the vigilant societies which now manage all such transactions in so business-like and scientific a fashion that an adoption is accomplished only to the flutter of card-catalogues and the faint odour of iodoform. At Bellevue, Mrs. Norris learned of a young girl who had just been brought to bed with an unsanctioned baby which she could not fend for and dared not acknowledge. It was this baby that Mrs. Norris agreed to take for her own, and every day she visited the hospital to keep an eye on the young mother and child. This healing start of a new interest in life, this process of merely getting acquainted, had been going on for two weeks when, on one of her visits, she was met by the head nurse with the news—the dislocating news—that the baby had died.

It was, one may guess, a benumbed Kathleen Norris who sat down and stared into the future, only half listening to the head nurse who, bless her, kept right on talking. I suspect she was a profoundly wise woman, that nurse. She talked of how, though mere birth and death were all part of the day's work in any hospital, the breaking of bad news was always the hardest part of her job. For instance, she was at that very moment faced with a task at the prospect of which even her case-hardened heart flinched. Had Mrs. Norris, as she waited in the anteroom, chanced to notice a shabby little boy sitting there, cooling his heels? No, Mrs. Norris hadn't. Well, *there*

was a case, the nurse said. That boy's mother was a young Frenchwoman—a worker in a laundry—whom the ambulance had brought to the hospital a week before from some humble home to which she and her child had drifted. The two had only each other in the world, and from sunup to sundown each day he had come and waited outside, just on the chance that he might be allowed to speak to her. Besides, he had no home where she was not.

Well, that frail, valiant mother had died a half-hour before, dropping out of sight like a pebble cast into the ocean, and now it was part of the nurse's job to go out and tell that youngster that, at the age of eight, he was alone in the world. "I don't suppose", she suggested hesitantly—a wise woman, that nurse must have been—"I don't suppose that you would go out and tell him for me."

I have always wished that I might have been eavesdropping on the scene that followed. You must picture for yourself how Mrs. Norris dried her eyes and went forth to this new assignment. How she began by drifting casually into the anteroom took a seat there among its waiting population, and finally scraped an acquaintance with the boy who sat by himself. My, but she was hungry. She had half a mind to run across to Childs for a bite to eat, but she did so hate to lunch alone. Would her young friend care to come along? His eyes told her that his mouth was watering at the mere mention of food, but he shook his head manfully. No, his mother might wake up and then he would be called—the nurse had promised—and if he were not on hand, what would his mother think? But that could be arranged. They would leave word in the ward where they could be found, and then the nurse could telephone, if she should wake who would not wake again.

After this first meal together, during which the two new friends got along famously and he told her all about the farm up in New England which was as far away in space and time as he could remember, Mrs. Norris used the same device for persuading him to come to her hotel and see some books which

belonged to her own little boy. It was twilight before she told him what had happened, but by then it was a friend who told him, a friend in whose arms he could cry himself to sleep.

Well, that is the end of the chapter, although it is not, by a long shot, the end of the story. For we have not come to that yet. Nor can I tell you what the name of the little boy was. I can only tell you what it is to-day. It is Bill Norris. He is grown-up now. The last time I had news of him, he was a star reporter on the Pacific Coast, and the very apple of her eye.

—*While Rome Burns*

LUDWIG BEMELMANS

What is the connection between the Hotel Splendide and—Ecuador? I only raise the matter because Ludwig Bemelmans writes on both with charm and facility. He would have us believe that his stories set behind the restaurant's baize doors reflect his own life. But why Ecuador too? Mr. Bemelmans actually went there and wrote a highly amusing account of his travels, in THE DONKEY INSIDE. Faced with a necessary choice of one dish from the menu, I have chosen the Splendide side of his humour, a delectable morsel about a resourceful head-waiter from his book SMALL BEER. In England the Hotel Splendide stories have recently appeared in book form.

The author's illustrations make a witty commentary on his story. His style has a certain continental flourish and abandon. One could imagine him, perhaps, sitting down in one of his palm lounges with a cup of rococo and a baroque cake.

“NO TROUBLE AT ALL”

The world is full of *maîtres d'hôtel*, many of whom are able, well-informed men. But only one in a hundred thousand is blessed with that rarest, most priceless of qualities so generously evident in Gabriel, the *Maître* of the Cocofinger Palace Hotel in New York.

We see this peculiar talent in his profile, behind the ear, under “Detail and Executive Ability”. It is the faculty of “Anticipation”, an astral clairvoyance with which to sense catastrophe, anywhere in the wide realm of his authority. Not only to feel it ahead, but to prepare for it and minimize the effect thereof.

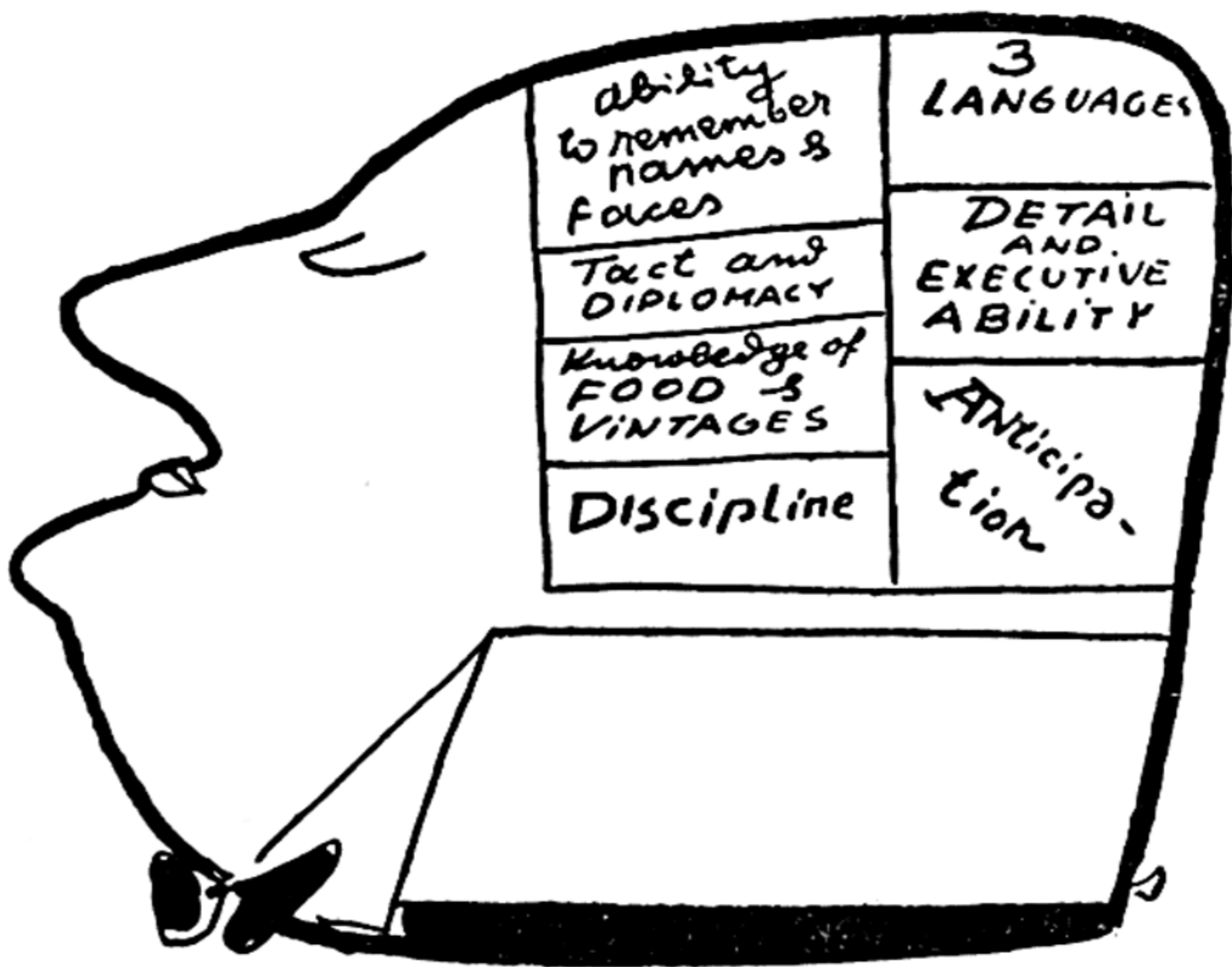
One more look at the graph, and it is evident to anyone why, with such talents, Gabriel has come up, up, up, from the position of third piccolo at the humble “King Wenceslaus” in Przemyśl, through the pantries and over the red carpets of Madame Sacher’s, the Negresco, Sheppard’s, the Meurice, Claridge’s, up to the golden doors of the restaurant of the hotels—the Cocofinger Palace Hotel in New York.

Gabriel smokes Dimitrinos, he has ten dozen shirts, Lobb makes his boots, he is driven in a Minerva, thinks in French, his hats come from Habig in Vienna, and both Noel Coward and Cole Porter have asked him who builds his fine tail-coats.

To his many subordinates, he speaks through his assistant, one Hector de Malherbes, who at one time worked for Max Reinhardt. (This temperamental aesthetic experience has fitted Malherbes most admirably for his present position.) Between the *Maître* and Malherbes is perfect, wordless understanding.

Never was proof positive of Gabriel’s great talents and of the mute felicity of Malherbes more clearly demonstrated than on the night and day of 25th February, 1937.

On that Thursday at three-fifteen in the afternoon, when the



"We see this peculiar talent in his profile."



last luncheon guest had left, Gabriel leaned on his desk with its seven drawers, one for each day of the week, and nodded gently to Malherbes. Malherbes bent down to the drawer *Jeudi*—because it was Thursday—and took from it a salmon-coloured folder with a sulphur label, on which was written, "Birthday Party, February 25, 1937, Mrs. George Washington Kelly."

Gabriel carried the folder up to his room, Malherbes bowed and left. In his room, Gabriel took off his fine tail-coat, which was rounded from much bowing, hung it up, sat on his bed, and carefully unfolded the bills that five-, ten-, and one-dollar patrons had pressed into his hand. He added them up and entered into a little crimson book, "February 25, *Déjeuner*, \$56." Then he took off his boots, leaned back into the pillows, stretched his toes in the sheer, black Sulka silk socks, and opened the salmon-coloured folder.

Madame George Washington Kelly was a difficult and exacting client.

The Italian waiters called her *bestia*, the French *canaille*, and the Germans *die alte Sau*. She had a desperate countenance, partly concealed by a veil; behind this, her face shone the colour of indigo. Her skin had the texture of volcanic rock seen from the air, with dirty snow swept into the crevices.

She dressed with complete immunity to fashion, except for the Beaux Arts Ball. On the night of that elaborate *affaire*, she had come with her friend, the "Spirit of the Midnight Sun", and together they had engaged the rooms and made the preliminary plans for this birthday party, of which Malherbes had said to Gabriel in *sotto voce* French, "it is not a birthday party—it is a centennial celebration". Gabriel had stared him into silence.

After many more visits and consultations with architects, stage designers, and florists, Madame had decided to build, at one end of the ballroom, a replica of her Miami retreat, "O Sole Mio", in its original noble dimensions. This was to be set among hibiscus, poinciana, and orange trees in bloom, surrounded by

forty-foot royal palm trees and fronted by wide terraces. Cutting through the centre of the room, from the terraces on the north to a magnificent flight of stairs on the south, ran the lagoon, filled with real water, and in this water was to float the genuine gondola which Mr. George Washington Kelly had brought as a souvenir from Venice and taken all the way to Miami. The stairs on the north end rose to a balcony; from there, a birthday cake was to be carried down, placed on the gondola, and rowed across to Sole Mio, where Mrs. Kelly's own darkies would bring it to her table to be cut.

The gondola was in Miami, also the royal palms, also the four white-haired darkies, brothers named Morandus. The Fire Department had sent a captain to study the position of the hydrants and windows, to connect a pumping-truck, and to fill the lagoon, which it was estimated, would take fourteen hours.

To do all this properly, the complete entertaining facilities of the hotel had been rented for the three days preceding the party and for an additional two following it, to clear away the debris.

Since Monday morning, the house was filled with drafts from open doors and windows, tall ladders, and empty smilax crates. Careless carpenters, careless stage-hands, careless plumbers and florists, ruined the peace and the carpets of the hotel with hammering, riveting, and soldering together the two-hundred-foot tank. Following on the heels of the plumbers came the painters, who painted the sides of the lagoon emerald green and a pattern of underwater scenery on its bottom. An eminent artist from Coral Gables supervised this.

The menu for this party was dictated by Madame herself, without benefit of Gabriel's advice. It was in the tradition of her entertainments and composed itself—at twelve dollars a cover for four hundred guests—of the following: *Caviar aux Blinis, Bortsch, Homard Sole Mio, Faisan Miami, Purée de Marrons, Pommes Soufflées, Salade Georges et Marthe, Bombe Washington, Café.*



Gabriel.

For the one thousand five hundred additional guests for supper, she had chosen an equally unfortunate repast. This, at five dollars a cover, consisted of *Velouté Marthe aux Croûtons Poussin en Cocotte Washington, Nouilles Polonaise, Petits Pois Parisienne, Bombe Sole Mio aux Fraises Cardinal, Gâteaux Georges, Café.*

Breakfast was to be served from four o'clock on, at one dollar and fifty cents per person. Provision was also made for eighty musicians' suppers, suppers for chauffeurs, maids, the secretaries at the door, and the announcer and detectives, at one dollar per person.

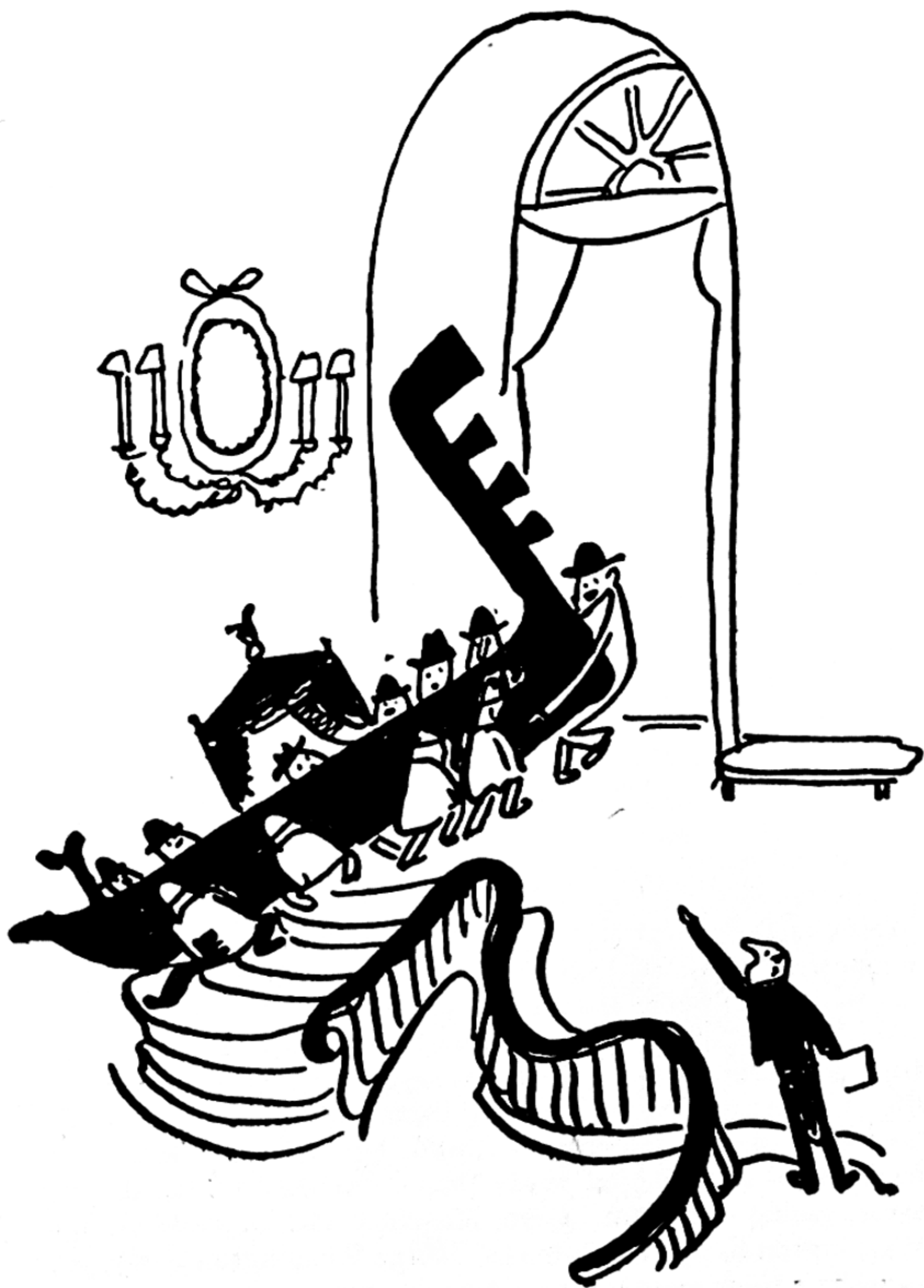
Cocktails were to be served during the reception: a fantastic, violent drink of Madame's own invention, named "High Diddle", the secret formula for which Madame fortunately gave to no one. Closely guarded, her trusty darkies—the Morandi—were to mix this, bringing most of the ingredients themselves.

After Gabriel had read the papers and made several notes, he rose, looked into a mirror, and took a loose smoking-jacket from his closet. He slipped on a pair of white gloves and walked below. Malherbes was waiting for him. It was six o'clock.

Gabriel nodded, and his assistant followed him with a silver pencil and a morocco portfolio.

They walked through the kitchen, where the cooks fished red lobsters out of steaming casseroles and chopped them in half. From there they went on to the cellar—here, men broke open cases of *cordon rouge* 1921, at eleven dollars a bottle, put them away in tubs, and stood them on top of one another. From here, they walked up to the ballroom proper. The tables, seating eight guests each, were set to the left and right of the lagoon. Sole Mio was finished, and, on the lower terraces in front of it—as indicated on the plan—was the crescent-shaped table, facing the room. Here, Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly and their son, George Washington Kelly, Jr., as well as their most intimate friends, were to sit.

Two painters were busy pouring and stirring fifty gallons of



"Watch out for the paint, you."

turquoise ink into the lagoon, to give it the precise colour of the waters in Miami. The Coral Gables artist had left with them a sample of that shade on a piece of water-colour paper, and, from time to time, they compared this and then added more ink. Up on the balcony of *Sole Mio*, two electricians were focusing spot-lights across the room, up to the magenta curtain on the other side.

From the street could be heard the last "*Pooooommmph*" "*Puuuuuuuumph*", "*Poomph*" of the Fire Department pumping-truck. The lagoon was filled.

Gabriel, walking into the hall, saw the last of twenty royal palms—in tubs, with their leaves carefully bandaged—being-carried upstairs, and below from the street appeared the neck of the Venetian gondola.

The great Maître nodded to Malherbes. Malherbes ran down to the door and told the men: "Watch out for the paint, you." Later on, in the office, Malherbes made certain that a gondolier had been engaged. Yes, he had. He was to report at the ball-room in costume, with a knowledge of how to row a gondola and ability to sing "*O Sole Mio*".

Gabriel went back to his room, lit a cigarette, and rested in his bath for half an hour. Then he dressed.

As on every evening, so now he received the dinner guests of the hotel at the door of the restaurant.

Madame George Washington Kelly's party over in the ball-room was in the able hands of his third assistant, Monsieur Rudi, a withered, one-time stable-boy of Prince Esterhazy.

At regular intervals, a courier crossed from the hall-room and whispered to Malherbes, "The guests are arriving". Then again, "The cocktails are being passed". After this, "The guests are entering the ballroom". Then, "Madame George Washington Kelly is very pleased", and on to "The guests are sitting down", and "The soup is being served". These bulletins were translated into French by Malherbes and whispered on to Gabriel, who nodded.

Dinner was almost over in the restaurant when Gabriel went

into a little side room, where on a table behind a screen, a plain meal was prepared for him. It consisted of some cold pheasant, cut from the bones, field salad with lemon dressing, and a plain compote of black cherries cooked without sugar. In ice under the table was his favourite wine, an elegant, slim bottle of Steinberger Kabinett, Preussische Staatsdomäne, 1921.

In the middle of his meal, before he had touched the great wine, Gabriel rose abruptly and quickly walked across the restaurant. Malherbes, who had eaten out in the second little room, swallowed quickly and followed him. Almost running, they crossed the entrance-hall of the ballroom and went up the staircase, to the third palm.

Gabriel stopped and beside him, as always, stopped Hector de Malherbes. The dessert had just been served, the remnants of the *Bombe Washington* were being carried from the room by the waiters, and, as set forth in the sheet of instructions, the lights were lowered.

Two heralds sounded the *Aida* theme as a command to silence and attention.

The heavy magenta curtains sailed back, and high above the audience appeared the birthday cake. It was magnificent, of generous proportions, and truly beautiful. The masterpiece of Brillat Bonafou, *Chef Pâtissier* of the Cocofinger Palace Hotel, twice the winner of the Médaille d'Or de la Société Culinaire de Paris, Founder and President of the Institut des Chefs Pâtis-siers de France. In weeks of patient, sensitive, loving labour, he had built a monument of sugar, tier upon tier, ten feet high, of raisin and almond cake. Of classic simplicity, yet covered with innumerable ornaments that depicted scenes from a happy sporting life. Up and down the sides of the cake, dozens of cherubim were busy carrying ribbons; these—Bordeaux and merald—represented the racing colours of the G. W. K. estables.

But the most wonderful part of the wonderful cake was its top. There, complete in all details, stood a miniature replica of O Sole Mio, correct as to palms, orange trees, the lagoon,

the gondola. Under the portico, an inch high, smiling hand in hand stood Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly: Madame with a bouquet of roses, Monsieur with his ever-present cigar, an Hoyo de Monterrey, at the end of which was a microscopic tuft of cotton.

That was, however, not all. Over the miniature Sole Mio hovered a brace of doves. In their beaks, most artfully held, were electric wires, so arranged that flashing on and off they spelled first “George” and then “Martha”. “George” in green, “Martha” in red. Five lady midgets, dressed as the Quintuplets, carried the cake downstairs in the light of the amber spot-lights.

The Hawaiians played “Happy Birthday to You, Happy Birthday to You”. Everyone sang, and all eyes were moist.

The gondolier started to punt down the lagoon to receive the cake.

At that moment, with all eyes upon them, one of the Quintuplets, Yvonne, stepped on an olive pip, and turned her ankle. The cake trembled, swayed, and fell into the lagoon, taking the midgets with it. “*Ffsssssss-hss*”, went the electric wires.

But where was Gabriel?

He stood under the royal palm and nodded quietly to Malherbes. Malherbes lifted one finger and looked up at the man with the spot-light.

The amber light left the lagoon and raced up the stairs. Out came the trumpeters again and sounded the *Aida* theme, the curtain swung open once more, again the Hawaiians played “Happy Birthday to You, Happy Birthday to You”.

As if the last dreadful minutes had never been on the watches of this world, there appeared to the unbelieving eyes of Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly and their guests and friends—THE CAKE again, unharmed, made with equal devotion, again the work of Brillat Bonafou, identically perfect and complete, with the scenes of the happy life, the cherubim, cigar and smoke, lagoon and gondola, doves, lights flashing the

names in green and red, and carried on the shoulders of a new set of Quintuplets.

The miserable first set of midgets swam to the shore of the lagoon, scrambled out, and tried to leave the ballroom in the shade of the tables.

Gabriel hissed "*Imbéciles* " to Malherbes. Malherbes hissed "*Imbéciles* " down to the midgets.

The new cake was rowed across, besung, carried to the table, cut, and served. Not until then did the great maître d'hotel leave the protecting shadow of the royal palm. Now he walked quietly, unseen, to his room, for, in spite of possessing every talent, and besides the gift of "Anticipation", Gabriel was a very modest man.

—*Small Beer*

FRANK SULLIVAN

There are so many modern American humorists, that the wisest, to avoid being left in the bunch at the rails, become known for some particular line in humour. Frank Sullivan has made great and glorious use of the Cliché. He invented a Cliché Expert, Mr Arbuthnot, who always had an answer ready, an answer which was clearly a cliché and which, as the interviews developed, exposed the horrid fact that much of our conversation consists of well-worn phrases strung loosely together. Mr. Arbuthnot is a caution.

Frank Sullivan has not been content, however, to remain the Cliché Expert. He is an all-round humorist as well. Writing a series of travelogues (By One Who Has Never Been There) he spent a famous week-end at Lady Astor's with the Cliveden Set.

"All the men wore knee-breeches and silk stockings except me. As a virile, patriotic Yankee I refused to kow-tow to British flummery, but as a concession to international goodwill I did roll my trousers up to the knees."

Fortunately, we don't have those American radio serial dramas over here. Read THE JUKES FAMILY and you'll see where the good fortune comes in. Frank Sullivan has been described as "America's funniest humorist". I do not know what a funny humorist is. But Mr. Sullivan certainly pulls our leg and the wool over our eyes—to borrow a spare pair of clichés, mix up a metaphor and pour the mixture over them.

THE CLICHE EXPERT TESTIFIES ON LOVE

Q. Mr. Arbuthnot, as an expert in the use of the cliché, are you prepared to testify here to-day regarding its application in topics of sex, love, matrimony, and so on?

A. I am, Mr. Sullivan.

Q. Very good. Now, Mr. Arbuthnot, what's love?

A. Love is blind.

Q. Good. What does love do?

A. Love makes the world go round.

Q. Whom does a young man fall in love with?

A. With the Only Girl in the World.

Q. Whom does a young woman fall in love with?

A. With the Only Boy in the World.

Q. When do they fall in love?

A. At first sight.

Q. How?

A. Madly.

Q. They are then said to be?

A. Victims of Cupid's darts.

Q. And he?

A. Whispers sweet nothings in her ear.

Q. Who loves a lover?

A. All the world loves a lover.

Q. Describe the Only Girl in the World.

A. Her eyes are like stars. Her teeth are like pearls. Her lips are ruby. Her cheek is damask, and her form divine.

Q. Haven't you forgotten something?

A. Eyes, teeth, lips, cheek, form—no, sir, I don't think so.

Q. Her hair?

A. Ch, certainly. How stupid of me. She has hair like spun gold.

Q. Very good, Mr. Arbuthnot. Now will you describe the Only Man?

A. He is a blond Viking, a he-man, and a square shooter who plays the game. There is something fine about him that rings true, and he has kept himself pure and clean so that when he meets the girl of his choice, the future mother of his children, he can look her in the eye.

Q. How?

A. Without flinching.

Q. Are all the Only Men blond Vikings?

A. Oh, no. Some of them are dark, handsome chaps who have sown their wild oats. This sort of Only Man has a way with a maid, and there is a devil in his eye. But he is not a cad; he would not play fast and loose with an Only Girl's affections. He has a heart of gold. He is a diamond in the rough. He tells the Only Girl frankly about his Past. She understands—and forgives.

Q. And marries him?

A. And marries him.

Q. Why?

A. To reform him.

Q. Does she reform him?

A. Seldom.

Q. Seldom what?

A. Seldom, if ever.

Q. Now, Mr. Arbuthnot, when the Only Man falls in love, madly, with the Only Girl, what does he do?

A. He walks on air.

Q. Yes, I know, but what does he do? I mean, what is it he pops?

A. Oh, excuse me. The question, of course.

Q. Then what do they plight?

A. Their troth.

Q. What happens after that?

A. They get married.

Q. What is marriage?

A. Marriage is a lottery.

Q. Where are marriages made?

A. Marriages are made in heaven.

Q. What does the bride do at the wedding?

A. She blushes.

Q. What does the groom do?

A. Forgets the ring.

Q. After the marriage, what?

A. The honeymoon.

Q. Then what?

A. She has a little secret.

Q. What is it?

A. She is knitting a tiny garment.

Q. What happens after that?

A. Oh, they settle down and raise a family and live happily ever afterwards, unless—

Q. Unless what?

A. Unless he is a fool for a pretty face.

Q. And if he is?

A. Then they come to the parting of the ways.

Q. Mr. Arbuthnot, thank you very much.

A. But I'm not through yet, sir.

Q. No?

A. Oh, no. There is another side to sex.

Q. There is? What side?

A. The seamy side. There are, you know, men who are wolves in sheep's clothing and there are, alas, lovely women who stoop to folly.

Q. My goodness! Describe these men you speak of, please.

A. They are snakes in the grass who do not place woman upon a pedestal. They are cads who kiss and tell, who trifle with a girl's affections and betray her innocent trust. They are cynics who think that a woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke. Their mottoes are "Love 'em and leave 'em" and "Catch 'em young, treat 'em rough, tell 'em nothing." These cads speak of "the light that lies in woman's eyes, and lies—and lies—and lies". In olden days they wore black, curling moustaches, which they twirled, and they invited

THE CLICHE EXPERT TESTIFIES ON LOVE

innocent Gibson girls to midnight suppers, with champagne, at their bachelor apartments, and said, "Little girl, why do you fear me?" Nowadays they have black, patent-leather hair, and roadsters, and they drive up to the kerb and say, "Girlie, can I give you a lift?" They are fiends in human form, who would rob a woman of her most priceless possession.

Q. What is that?

A. Her honour.

Q. How do they rob her?

A. By making improper advances.

Q. What does a woman do when a snake in the grass tries to rob her of her honour?

A. She defends her honour.

Q. How?

A. By repulsing his advances and scorning his embraces.

Q. How does she do that?

A. By saying, "Sir, I believe you forget yourself", or "Please take your arm away", or "I'll kindly thank you to remember I'm a lady", or "Let's not spoil it all".

Q. Suppose she doesn't say any of these things?

A. In that case, she takes the first false step.

Q. Where does the first false step take her?

A. Down the primrose path.

Q. What's the primrose path?

A. It's the easiest way.

Q. Where does it lead?

A. To a life of shame.

Q. What is a life of shame?

A. A life of shame is a fate worse than death.

Q. Now, after lovely woman has stooped to folly, what does she do to the gay Lothario who has robbed her of her most priceless possession?

A. She devotes the best years of her life to him.

Q. Then what does he do?

A. He casts her off.

Q. How?

A. Like an old shoe.

Q. Then what does she do?

A. She goes to their love nest, then everything goes black before her, her mind becomes a blank, she pulls a revolver, and gives the fiend in human form something to remember her by.

Q. That is called?

A. Avenging her honour.

Q. What is it no jury will do in such a case?

A. No jury will convict.

Q. Mr. Arbuthnot, your explanation of the correct application of the cliché in these matters has been most instructive, and I know that all of us cliché-users here will know exactly how to respond hereafter when, during a conversation, sex—when sex—when—ah——

A. I think what you want to say is, "When sex rears its ugly head", isn't it?

Q. Thank you, Mr. Arbuthnot. Thank you very much.

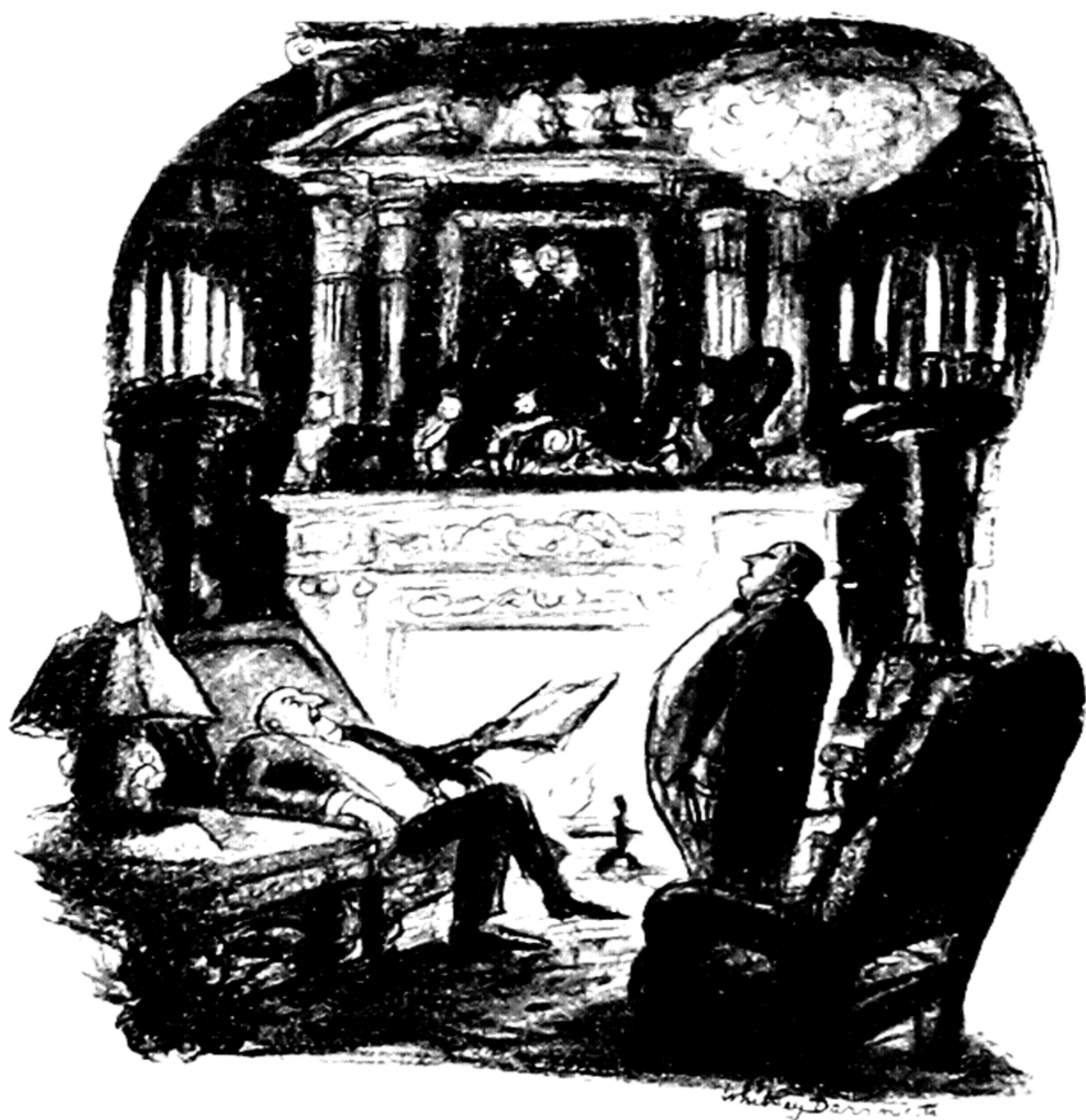
A. Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

—*Sullivan at Bay*

THE JUKES FAMILY

The air is so cluttered with homely little radio programmes recounting the daily heartaches and joys of a multitude of families—"The Green Family", "The Brown Family", "This Man's Family", "That Man's Family", and so on—that I have decided to climb on the band wagon with my own programme "The Jukes Family". It will recount, from day to day, the joys and sorrows of an average, homey, not-quite-bright family of the lower class.

The matriarch is Ma Jukes, a friendly old party of forty-five who has brought fifteen or twenty children into the world and has learned to take things as they come. She does the best she can to manage her unruly brood, each of whom has some characteristic that sets him or her apart from the herd. For instance, it has long been a subject of frank discussion in the



Whitney Darrow, Jr.

New Yorker

"I'm through with the paper, Roberts. Take it out and sell it!"



Richard Decker

New Yorker

"Goodness gracious, child, what have you done?"

family whether the ears on Laddie, the seventh boy, extend above the top of his head or whether the plateau of his head simply fails to rise to the top of his ears.

The fourth child, Slim, age twenty-two, has a penchant for bigamy which frequently brings upon him the good-natured raillery of the rest of the family. Another of the boys, Timmy, is doing a stretch in Sing Sing, and Mayzetta, the third girl, is in her sophomore year at the Dobbville Home for Delinquent Females. But the glamour girl of the Jukes Family is Babs—tall, striking, with dark, flashing eyes and a head of hair five and a half feet long. And every single strand of it a natural emerald green! Ma Jukes' family (she was a Cabot) all had hair of vivid yellow. Pa's folks' hair had been Alice blue. Nature's alchemy had combined the two colours happily in Babs.

Now then, as our first programme opens, we find Ma Jukes setting a kettle of water to boil. A dozen or so of the youngsters, among them her first-born, Jeddie, a fine-looking chap of thirty with white hair and pink eyes, romp boisterously under her feet as she potters about the stove. There is a scuffle among the bairns. Ma intervenes.

"Monongahela!" she admonishes a strapping girl of about ten. "You give Jeddie back his doll. Ain't you ashamed to be playin' with dolls, a big gal like you. . . . Tarnation take it, git out from under my feet afore ye git scalded. Oh, it's you, Chub."

Chub is an attractive child of nineteen, always hanging around the stove because he *likes* to be scalded. Ma good-naturedly ladles a teaspoonful of hot water on him.

"Now, thar, that's enough. Git along an' quit pesterin' yer pore ole ma."

Chub scampers off with a happy scream of agony.

"I declar'," says Ma, philosophizing in the manner of all the Mas on the family radio programmes, "I don't know what the younger generation's a-comin' to. When I was a young un we hung around our ma to git the scrapin's from the cake bowl,

not to git hot water thrun on us. Now, whatever's a-keepin yer pa?"

"I'm hongry", cries Eglantine Jukes, a comely sprite of fifteen without a chin.

Here the voice of Chuckles Gladstone, the announcer, is heard. Ma winces. In the cheery voice of the typical family-programme announcer, Chuckles says that if little Eglantine is "hongry", she had just better get herself a good, big, heapin' ole dish of rich, creamy, juicy, delicious, nourishing Dwerps, the Sweetheart of Breakfast Foods. "So go to your corner grocery store to-night, or at the very latest to-morrow morning, etc., etc.", concludes Chuckles.

"I'm still hongry", says Eglantine.

"Well, yer pa oughta be here any minnit now with the chicken", says Ma. "Wonder what's a-keepin' him? Oh, here he is!"

Pa Jukes enters. He is a jovial soul who takes the responsibilities of a large family in his stride. His face, if you can call it a face, is unlined by the years, and its frank, open expression is enhanced rather than marred by an almost complete absence of chin.

"Howdy, Pa", says Ma. "Where's the chicken? You said you was a-goin' to snag us a chicken fer supper."

"Shucks, Ma, there ain't none", apologizes Pa. "Dad rat it, I was lucky I got out of Ole Man Eddy's hencoop 'thout gettin a hideful o' buckshot."

Ma's face falls at this news, but only for an instant. She quickly hides her disappointment and presents a brave front to the children. All mothers on family programmes are constantly presenting brave fronts in the face of domestic problems. "Tarnation take the ornery ole cuss!" she says. "Can't even leave a neighbour have a measly ole chicken. An' after the way we all pitched in an' helped, the night his barn took fire."

"Now, Ma", says Pa, "you know we wa'nt doin' no mor'n our plain duty in helpin' put that fire out. You know 's well 's I do, 'twas our Buster set that barn afire."

Buster is the firebug of the Jukes family, a gay, irresponsible Puck of thirteen with the typical Jukes no-chin, and regarded by the neighbours as quite a tease because of his habit of setting buildings afire every so often.

"Well", says Ma, "I kind o' had my face fixed fer chicken, but I guess we c'n manage. Here, Lump, you run down to Perkins' grocery and fetch up a few cans salmon an' any other vittles ye think might tech the spot."

"Not me", Lump says. "Jedge tole me ef I got caught swipin' any more stuff out'n stores, he'd send me to state's prison sure 'nough."

"That so, young Mister High-an'-Mighty!" snaps Pa Jukes "Well, lemme tell you one thing, you young whippersnapper, ef state's prison's good enough fer yer brother Timmy, it's plenty good enough fer you."

"Now, Pa", says Ma, soothingly.

"Well, dad rat it, Ma, jest don't let him git so uppity, that's all. I don't know whats got into the younger generation lately. Why, there ain't a nicer crowd o' boys you'd want to meet than the boys at Sing Sing. Leastwise, 'twas so in my day thar."

"Pa, mebbe one o' the children that ain't never been pinched better go", advises Ma. "It'll look better."

There are shouts from the kiddies of "Me, Ma! Let me go! I wanna go, Ma!"

At this point the door bursts open and in comes Wash Jukes, an attractive, coffee-coloured lad of fourteen.

"Guess what, Ma!" Wash exults. "The jedge jes' Aer-nounced me a ju-vile delinquent!"

Wash's brothers and sisters are agog with admiration and Ma glows with maternal pride, but Brother Lump is in the clutch of the green-eyed monster.

"Shucks!" says Lump. "I was a ju-vile delinquent when I was ten year old, wa'nt I, Ma?"

"Go on, po' white trash", sneers Wash.

"Wash Jukes!" Ma rebukes. "You lemme hear you call yer

brother po' white trash again an' I'll slap ye down. Now git along to the store and fetch back some vittles." She sighs.

"What's wrong, Ma?" asks Pa.

"Pa, I'm a -worrit about Babs. I wa'n't fixin' to tell ye, because I didn't aim to fret ye none, but she ain't been hum now fer two days and two nights."

"Shucks, Ma, she prob'ly stopped off at some gal friend's house on her way hum from school."

"She hadn't oughta gone an' done it 'thout lettin' me know. I declar', I don't know what the younger generation's a-comin' to. When I was a gal Babs' age, ef I stayed away from hum fer more'n one night a-runnin', I got Hail Columbia from the matron."

"Don't ye fret none about Babs, Ma. She's jest young an' full o' fun. Leave her have her fling. She'll be old soon enough."

"Mebbe yer right, Pa, but it seems to me the young uns don't pay no heed to their elders nowadays nohow. Mebbe I'm a-gettin' old-fashioned, but I kind o' like to know whar my children is o' nights. Say, that reminds me, I got a letter from Timmy to-day."

"Ye did? Then he's out o' solitary. They don't let ye write no letters when yer in solitary. Leastwise, they didn't in my day at Sing Sing. What's he say?"

"Tarnation take it, how do I know? That's why I'm a-waitin for Babs to come hum, so's she can read it to me. Buster!"

"Yes, Ma!"

"Quit settin' fire to Chub!"

"But he ast me to set him afire, Ma", Buster says.

"Sure I did, Ma", says Chub.

"Makes no difference", says Ma sternly. "'Tain't good fer ye. Ye want to grow up all charred?"

"Yes", says Chub, eagerly.

"Well, I swan to glory, I don't know what the younger generation's a-comin' to. Pa, put out Chub, will ye?"

With a good-natured chuckle, Pa throws a pail of water over

Chub just as Wash returns from his trip to Perkins' store. The hungry brood crowds around him eagerly.

"Any luck, Wash?" says Ma.

"Naw", says Wash. "Ole Perkins was a-watchin' me all the time. All I could git was this." He takes a ham from beneath his blouse.

"Well", says Ma, "'tain't much, but it's somethin'."

"And this." Wash produces another package.

"A flitch o' bacon", says Ma. "Now, that's real nice." Ma's tone is cheery. She is presenting a brave front.

"And these", says Wash, and he unloads from various crannies of his person a quantity of canned goods, fresh vegetables, assorted table delicacies, a watermelon, and a case of soft drinks.

"That all ye got?" asks Ma, striving to keep the disappointment from her voice. "Well, ye done the best ye could. We'll manage somehow."

Now the door opens and who bursts in but Babs, her handsome eyes flashing and her green hair flying in the wind.

"Ma", cries Babs, "guess what!"

"Babs Jukes, whar you been?" says Ma, severely, "Go tidy up yer hair. Look at ye!"

"Ma!" cries Babs. "I got a job!"

Pa winces at the sound of the ugly three-letter word:

"What's the job?" Ma inquires, coldly, after a pause.

"In the circus! Lady Godiva!"

An artistic career! Well, that's different. Not quite to be classed as work. The alarm subsides, and the family is agog to hear about Babs' job.

"My sakes!" says Ma. "To think we got a real, gen-wine actress in the family!"

"Babs, c'n I have yer autograph?" asks little Monongahela.

Ma is thinking happily how she will come it over her neighbour up the alley, Mrs. Kallikak, who has been insufferable

ever since her son got the hot squat for the axe murder of seven.

"Reason I ain't been hum", says Babs, "is I had to go to New York right away an' sign up. Guess they was afraid some other circus might grab me."

"I allus knew Babs'd go places", says Pa, with pride.

"Gee Whittaker, I'm tired", says Babs. "I set up on that train from New York the hull night."

"Set down, child", urges Ma. "I'll git ye a cup o' tea."

Babs sinks into a chair and the youngsters crowd around their distinguished sister, beseeching her for details of her new career and entreating her to get them jobs as freaks in the sideshow.

Suddenly, above the childish babble, there is heard a shriek, then a sinister crackling noise, and cries of alarm as the children scurry to safety.

"Buster! You quit that!" Ma shouts, as is her wont whenever she hears crackling, but it is too late. This time Buster's prank has succeeded all too well. By the time rescue measures have been taken, Babs' once-glorious mane is a smoldering ruin, naught of it remaining save a charred stubble.

Babs is inconsolable.

"Don't you fret none, dearie", Ma attempts to comfort her. "It'll grow in again in no time at all. Onct, when I had the type-ford fever—"

But here the voice of Chuckles Gladsome interrupts Ma.

"Well, folks", says he, "all I can say is, if Babs Jukes wants that hair to grow again in time for her to join the circus, she had just better go to-night, or to-morrow morning at the very latest, to the nearest drugstore and get a bottle of Stickney's Famous Hair Restorer. Ladies, if your hair bothers you, if it is dull, dry, and hard to manage—"

A shot rings out.

When the smoke clears, Ma Jukes is standing over poor Chuckles with Pa's shotgun in her right hand.

"Got him, by crackyl!" she announces, with grim pleasure.

THE JUKES FAMILY

"Ma", Pa says. "Ye hadn't ought to o' gone an' done that. The law says 'tain't legal to shoot a buck announcer out o' season. Now ye've let ye'self in fer a good fine, and whar ye're a-goin' to raise the dough, I don't know."

Well, what will happen to Ma? Will any jury convict? Will any Fish and Game Commission slap a fine on her for shooting an announcer, in season or out? Is Ma on her way to the clink? And how about Babs' hair? Will it grow back in time for her to join the circus? Follow the adventures of that happy-go-lucky, madcap lovable, charming, irresponsible bunch, the Jukes Family! Tune in on this station to-morrow afternoon at this same hour and find out what happened to Ma Jukes. Your announcer is Paul Parks, substituting for Chuckles Gladsome. Bi-ing, ba-ang, bo-ong!



W. Morgan

New Yorker

PRINTEMPS
Paris—under the Nazis

MARGARET HALSEY

When Authoress Halsey (as an American magazine would say) visited England for the third time, she brought her diary with her. The result was a brisk and penetrating account of life in an English country town, in Oxford, London and elsewhere. She was brightly candid. In WITH MALICE TOWARDS SOME she made mordant comments about our wives' hats, about our cooking, our parties, hotels and daily habits.

Now this is something we enjoy. People you can't satirize are scarcely worth travelling thousands of miles to visit. We are used to the satire, and like it if expertly handled. I only hope Miss Halsey did not think we should blush or be really annoyed. If she visits us again, in war-time, however, she will find a rather different Britain. Miss Halsey has something of E. M. Delafield's style—with a little more make-up on.

THE LAST EARTHLY REPRESENTATIVE

Just what is Miss Angelica Purdey's place in the scheme of things at Exeter? I cannot for the moment remember, but she seems to be one of the major bumps in the local topography. She is a large, dark woman of about thirty-five who goes in at the waist and then goes right out again, and she lives in a big, ripe old house outside the town of whose truly felicitous furniture she is just a soupçon too well aware. Miss Purdy is well-connected—a blessing which the gods no doubt bestowed upon her because of her singular capacity for enjoying it. More specifically, a certain Lady Dorothy Worthing, since she happened to be passing through Exeter to-day, was persuaded by Miss Purdy to stop off and have tea at the big, ripe old house; and Henry and I and ten or twelve hand-picked students were invited to go out and breathe a wholesome whiff or two of upper-classiness. This, Miss Purdy impressed upon us, was a privilege of no mean order, for the Lady Dorothy is not one of your nineteenth century, pride-of-Liverpool aristocrats. The Lady Dorothy is the last earthly representative of certain crude but effective persons who raised England from a pup, and Miss Purdy did not hide from us that the affair was going to be a pretty salubrious experience for all us commoners. It was difficult, in fact, wholly to rid one's self of a notion that the Lady Dorothy would look like Vitamin D.

However, she did not look like Vitamin D. She did not, in fact, look like much of anything. She was of an indefinite age and wore a wrinkled dress of blue voile and a black straw hat shaped like a terminal moraine. You would have taken her for the wife of a chicken farmer, rather than the last of the Warwickshire Mohican. As she was hard of hearing, the conversation progressed with difficulty. When she had been made to understand that Henry and I were Americans, she asked

me what I thought of England. I answered that I thought it was a very beautiful country.

"What?" she said.

"It's an extremely beautiful country", I repeated with a great effort at distinctness.

She looked blank. One of the students, a young man, took up the refrain.

"She says it's an *extremely beautiful* country", he explained hardily. There was still no sign of understanding. I began to wish I had made some reply that would have stood up better under the wear and tear.

Miss Purdy nodded to another student, a girl this time, who rose and went over to the guest. Putting her lips close to the visitor's ear, she declared, "EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL".

"Ah", said the Lady Dorothy, and relaxed. She gave me a stately but amiable inclination of the head. She undeniably had manner, though I think if I had been Miss Purdy and had invited fourteen or so people to an exhibition of pure manner, I would have thrown in somebody who could blow smoke rings as a makeweight.

We soon gave up trying to include the Last Earthly Rep. in the conversation. The students gave her tea, thin bread and butter, jam and cakes, and they took turns timidly lowering themselves down beside her on the sofa and injecting her with a question or a simple comment. This seemed a workable enough arrangement and things went on very satisfactorily, though I was so cold my fingers would not work and my hands moved all in one piece. It had originally been planned to have tea on the lawn. But the day was rainy and wintrily cold, so the ceremony took place indoors in a tall, chilly, beautiful room with no fire in the fireplace and all the windows open.

Henry brought the visitor a second cup of tea.

"In America you don't have tea in the afternoon", she said to him abruptly. Henry shook his head.

"My husband and I went to America", continued the lady. "They always gave us tea." Henry made a modest clucking

sound, as who should say, "Ah, these polite Americans . . ." but the guest did not hear it. The two of them looked at each other dubiously for a minute and then Henry backed away.

Gradually the students, always well-mannered, lost their frightened look. Miss Purdy was being gracious on all eight cylinders, and certainly the affair did seem to be going off remarkably well. But suddenly there was a hideous interruption. The distinguished visitor got a crumb in her throat and began to choke terrifyingly. Henry, who tends to be pragmatic, got up to thump the patrician back. Halfway there, however, he paused, and either losing his nerve or deciding that the lady was not worth saving, he turned round and came back again. This left nothing for the rest of us to do but pretend we did not hear any whooping sounds and act as if at least one death by strangulation were a feature of every well-run tea party. Miss Purdy, a cup of tea in her hand, bent over the gurgling noblewoman, and the rest of us said distractedly that it was frightful weather, oh yes, frightful, yes really dreadful.

When the guest had finally managed to get down a swallow of tea and had subsided from purple to an angry pink, Miss Purdy waved to us to go away. We rose gratefully, said goodbye with carefully averted eyes, and filed sheepishly out. An hour later, Henry and I met Miss Purdy in the High Street where she stopped us and talked about the crumb as if it had been planned by Communists, acting under explicit instructions from Moscow.

ENGLISH PARTY

A publisher who was at Oxford with Henry asked us to a party he was giving last night, so we had our evening clothes pressed and set off feeling rather gay and anticipatory. It was not a mood, however, destined to last very long. Our host greeted us affably and told us where to leave our wraps. When

we came back from leaving them, he escorted us to the doorway of a large room and then, just as I was ponderously framing a sentence about how kind it had been of him to invite us, he vanished. He just wasn't there any more. I blinked, and Henry said, "Remind me to ask him how he does that".

Left to our own devices, we decided that the best thing to do was to assume an aspect of composure and make a little voyage of exploration. There were three large rooms, tall and handsome and furnished in the gravely comfortable, tempered-eighteenth century manner at which the English are peculiarly adept. The rooms were filled with well-fed, well-washed, well-groomed men and with a quantity of women rather better dressed than the matrons of Exeter, but still looking as if they had all changed clothes with each other, just for a lark. As was to be expected, there was not, in the whole company, a single person we knew.

We finished our tour and stood in a corner of one of the rooms, feeling sad and disillusioned and as superfluous as lovers' knots on a locomotive. People were distributed around in little clusters and in big clusters, all talking gaily and all apparently very well known to each other. Our host was nowhere in sight.

"What do we do now?" I asked.

Henry smiled sorrowfully.

"Have you anything white", he said, "that we could run up on a pole?"

One of the other guests came towards us carrying, rather unskilfully, three drinks. I involuntarily smiled a little, for the drinks were spilling over on to his wrist and, judging from the expression on his face, running up his sleeve. But when he glanced up and saw me smiling, he gave me a look of pitying disapproval, which would have been more appropriate if I had been soliciting him on the street, and went gravely on his way.

I looked around again at those cohesive groups of men and women. It occurred to me that perhaps we were supposed to take the initiative and go up and talk to the people. But

nobody seemed to be roaming about at large, and forcing a way into one of those tight little clusters appeared about as practicable as approaching the Archbishop of Canterbury and asking him if he were doing anything to-night.

Man-hunts, when I read about them in the paper, always distress me acutely on behalf of the poor fugitive, but the ensuing two hours made me think that possibly his position is not altogether unenviable. We sat on a sofa and had a cigarette. A man came past and stepped on my foot and said, "I beg your pardon". We went and stood in front of a fireplace. Another man, tall and middle-aged and with a kindly face, approached us and asked diffidently if we were the Americans. Just as Henry opened his mouth to reply, a woman screamed, "*Hilary, darling!*" in a voice like the upper registers of a wind machine and the middle-aged man excused himself and went away.

We sat on the sofa and smoked. We stood in front of the fireplace and smoked. We walked through all the rooms again. Then Henry pointed out that as there were drinks in evidence, there must be some place to get them. After a little reconnoitring, we discovered a small room off on one side, empty except for a man with a white coat and a face like the outside of a refrigerator. He silently gave us champagne cocktails, which we as silently drank. Then he silently gave us another cocktail, which we also drank in silence, and then we went back to the fireplace.

It began to seem to me that people were looking at us curiously. We walked through all the rooms again and coming upon a bookcase, inspected some of the titles. They were mostly about birds and gardening. "If we had 'the guts of an ant'", I said to Henry, indicating the books, "we'd find some conspicuous chairs and curl up with a couple of those." Instead we returned to the sofa.

Suddenly we noticed our host approaching us. I was glad to see him in the flesh and to realize that he had not, after all, been yanked off by imperative wraiths who had decided to

add a note of class and tone and Oxford breeding to the spirit world. But my heart sank when I saw from his unslackened pace that he was merely on his way to somewhere else. He asked us urgently if we had found out where the drinks were, but was out of earshot before there was time to answer.

We sank back on the sofa. I tied knots in my handkerchief and then carefully untied them. and Henry turned a package of matches over and over in his fingers.

"Let's play Beaver", I said.

"Can't", replied Henry gloomily. "Nothing but moustaches."

I relapsed into silence again. "I'll give somebody", I decided to myself, "fourteen more knots to come up and speak to us." So I tied fourteen more knots, taking care not to hurry, and then I tied two more, just for good measure. After that, I stood up.

"I'm going", I said equably.

Henry stood up too.

"Might as well", he answered, after a moment's thought. "First thing you know somebody will penetrate our incognito."

We found our coats again and met in the hall. This time the other guests did look at us curiously. Henry murmured something about saying goodbye to the host.

"You can't", I said, pulling my wrap around me. "He changed himself into a Tom Collins and somebody drank him." But Henry waylaid a man who was crossing the hallway and gave him, to his great surprise, an anæmic little excuse to be relayed to the publisher. Then we let ourselves out.

—*With Malice Towards Some*

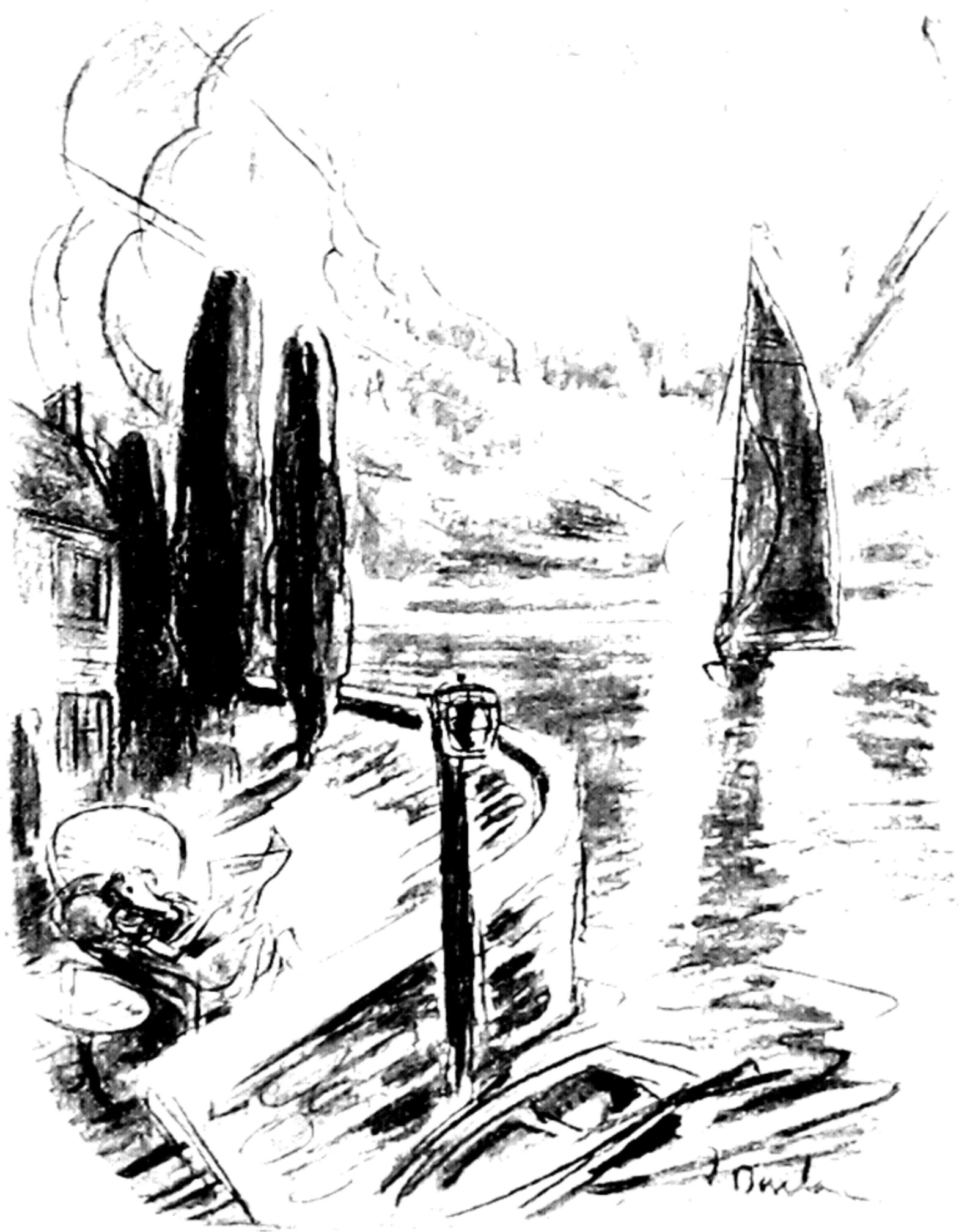
DAMON RUNYON

American baseball crowds get more excited than English football crowds. American sports commentators are more lurid and picturesque, and exploit the rich American idiom to its fullest. Alfred Damon Runyon made a big name for himself as a sporting writer before he started his MORE THAN SOMEWHAT stories of the New York Underworld.

All his characters are either guys or dolls—Dave the Dude, Rosa Midnight, Harry the Horse, Ropes McGonnigle, and other people who remind you of Humphrey Bogart in a tough frame of mind on a dark night. The narrator of the stories is a curiously mild guy whose philosophy can be summed up as "anything for a quiet life."

Runyon's style is exhilarating. Students of grammar—and, since Cabinet Ministers read detective novels, no doubt grammarians read Runyon—will notice that he never uses a past tense, only a historic present. The effect has its own strange fascination. Damon Runyon has been compared with Bret Harte, and O. Henry, and carries on the dialect tradition. His invention may be as clever as O. Henry's, but the latter's characters were rarely criminal.

The MORE THAN SOMEWHAT series number several volumes. MY WIFE ETHEL introduces a dumb but fetching doll and, as you would expect, Runyon has recently turned to film scenarios, writing A SLIGHT CASE OF MURDER and producing BIG STREET.



Barlow

New York

"O. K., Maria. You can put on the chops now"



R. Taylor

New Yorker

“ It’s practically impossible to heat this damned place”

BLOOD PRESSURE

It is maybe eleven-thirty of a Wednesday night, and I am standing at the corner of Forty-eighth Street and Seventh Avenue, thinking about my blood pressure, which is a proposition I never before think much about.

In fact, I never hear of my blood pressure before this Wednesday afternoon when I go around to see Doc Brennan about my stomach, and he puts a gag on my arm and tells me that my blood pressure is higher than a cat's back, and the idea is for me to be careful about what I eat, and to avoid excitement, or I may pop off all of a sudden when I am least expecting it.

"A nervous man such as you with a blood pressure away up in the paint cards must live quietly", Doc Brennan says. "Ten bucks, please", he says.

Well, I am standing there thinking it is not going to be so tough to avoid excitement the way things are around this town right now, and wishing I have my ten bucks back to bet it on Sun Beau in the fourth race at Pimlico the next day, when all of a sudden I look up, and who is in front of me but Rusty Charley.

Now if I have any idea Rusty Charley is coming my way, you can go and bet all the coffee in Java I will be somewhere else at once, for Rusty Charley is not a guy I wish to have any truck with whatever. In fact, I wish no part of him. Furthermore, nobody else in this town wishes to have any part of Rusty Charley, for he is a hard guy indeed. In fact, there is no harder guy anywhere in the world. He is a big wide guy with two large hard hands and a great deal of very bad disposition, and he thinks nothing of knocking people down and stepping on their kissers if he feels like it.

In fact, this Rusty Charley is what is called a gorill, because he is known to often carry a gun in his pants pocket, and sometimes to shoot people down as dead as door-nails with it

if he does not like the way they wear their hats—and Rusty Charley is very critical of hats. The chances are Rusty Charley shoots many a guy in this man's town, and those he does not shoot he sticks with his shiv—which is a knife—and the only reason he is not in jail is because he just gets out of it, and the law does not have time to think up something to put him back in again for.

Anyway, the first thing I know about Rusty Charley being in my neighbourhood is when I hear him saying: "Well, well, well, here we are!"

Then he grabs me by the collar, so it is no use of me thinking of taking it on the lam away from there, although I greatly wish to do so.

"Hello, Rusty", I say, very pleasant. "What is the score?"

"Everything is about even", Rusty says. "I am glad to see you, because I am looking for company. I am over in Philadelphia for three days on business."

"I hope and trust that you do all right for yourself in Philly, Rusty", I say; but his news makes me very nervous, because I am a great hand for reading the papers and I have a pretty good idea what Rusty's business in Philly is. It is only the day before that I see a little item from Philly in the papers about how Gloomy Gus Smallwood, who is a very large operator in the alcohol business there, is guzzled right at his front door.

Of course, I do not know that Rusty Charley is the party who guzzles Gloomy Gus Smallwood, but Rusty Charley is in Philly when Gus is guzzled, and I can put two and two together as well as anybody. It is the same thing as if there is a bank robbery in Cleveland, Ohio, and Rusty Charley is in Cleveland, Ohio, or near there. So I am very nervous, and I figure it is a sure thing my blood pressure is going up every second.

"How much dough do you have on you?" Rusty says. "I am plumb broke."

"I do not have more than a couple of bobs, Rusty", I say, "I pay a doctor ten bucks to-day to find out my blood pressure is very bad. But of course you are welcome to what I have."

"Well, a couple of bobs is no good to high-class guys like you and me", Rusty says. "Let us go to Nathan Detroit's crap game and win some money."

Now, of course, I do not wish to go to Nathan Detroit's crap game; and if I do wish to go there I do not wish to go with Rusty Charley, because a guy is sometimes judged by the company he keeps, especially around crap games and Rusty Charley is apt to be considered bad company. Anyway, I do not have any dough to shoot craps with, and if I do have dough to shoot craps with, I will not shoot craps with it at all, but will bet it on Sun Beau, or maybe take it home and pay off some of the overhead around my joint, such as rent.

Furthermore, I remember what Doc Brennan tells me about avoiding excitement, and I know there is apt to be excitement around Nathan Detroit's crap game if Rusty Charley goes there, and maybe run my blood pressure up and cause me to pop off very unexpected. In fact, I already feel my blood jumping more than somewhat inside me, but naturally I am not going to give Rusty Charley any argument, so we go to Nathan Detroit's crap game.

This crap game is over a garage in Fifty-second Street this particular night, though sometimes it is over a restaurant in Forty-seventh Street, or in back of a cigar store in Forty-fourth Street. In fact, Nathan Detroit's crap game is apt to be anywhere, because it moves around every night, as there is no sense in a crap game staying in one spot until the coppers find out where it is.

So Nathan Detroit moves his crap game from spot to spot, and citizens wishing to do business with him have to ask where he is every night; and of course almost everybody on Broadway knows this, as Nathan Detroit has guys walking up and down and around and about, telling the public his address, and giving out the password for the evening.

Well, Jack the Beefer is sitting in an automobile outside the garage in Fifty-second Street when Rusty Charley and I come along, and he says "Kansas City", very low, as we pass, this

being the password for the evening; but we do not have to use any password whatever when we climb the stairs over the garage, because the minute Solid John, the doorman, peeks out through his peephole when we knock, and sees Rusty Charley with me, he opens up very quick indeed, and gives us a big castor-oil smile, for nobody in this town is keeping doors shut on Rusty Charley very long.

It is a very dirty room over the garage, and full of smoke, and the crap game is on an old pool table; and around the table, and packed in so close you cannot get a knitting-needle between any two guys with a mawl, are all the high shots in town, for there is plenty of money around at this time, and many citizens are very prosperous. Furthermore, I wish to say there are some very tough guys around the table, too, including guys who will shoot you in the head, or maybe the stomach, and think nothing whatever about the matter.

In fact, when I see such guys as Harry the Horse, from Brooklyn, and Sleepout Sam Levinsky, and Lone Louie, from Harlem, I know this is a bad place for my blood pressure, for these are very tough guys indeed, and are known as such to one and all in this town.

But there they are wedged up against the table with Nick the Greek, Big Nig, Grey John, Okay Okun, and many other high shots, and they all have big coarse G notes in their hands which they are tossing around back and forth as if these G notes are nothing but pieces of waste paper.

On the outside of the mob at the table are a lot of small operators who are trying to cram their fists in between the high shots now and then to get down a bet, and there are also guys present who are called Shylocks, because they will lend you dough when you go broke at the table, on watches or rings, or maybe cuff-links, at very good interest.

Well, as I say, there is no room at the table for as many as one more very thin guy when we walk into the joint, but Rusty Charley lets out a big hello as we enter, and the guys all look around, and the next minute there is space at the table big

enough not only for Rusty Charley but for me, too. It really is quite magical the way there is suddenly room for us when there is no room whatever for anybody when we come in.

"Who is the gunner?" Rusty Charley asks, looking all around.

"Why, you are, Charley", Big Nig, the stick man in the game, says very quick, handing Charley a pair of dice, although afterward I hear that his pal is right in the middle of a roll trying to make nine when we step up to the table. Everybody is very quiet, just looking at Charley. Nobody pays any attention to me, because I am known to one and all as a guy who is just around, and nobody figures me in on any part of Charley, although Harry the Horse looks at me once in a way that I know is no good for my blood pressure, or for anybody else's blood pressure as far as this goes.

Well, Charley takes the dice and turns to a little guy in a derby hat who is standing next to him scrooching back so Charley will not notice him, and Charley lifts the derby hat off the little guy's head, and rattles the dice in his hand and chucks them into the hat and goes "Hah!" like crap shooters always do when they are rolling the dice. Then Charley peeks into the hat and says "Ten", although he does not let anybody else look in the hat, not even me, so nobody knows if Charley throws a ten, or what.

But, of course, nobody around is going to up and doubt that Rusty Charley throws a ten, because Charley may figure it is the same thing as calling him a liar, and Charley is such a guy as is apt to hate being called a liar..

Now Nathan Detroit's crap game is what is called a head-and-head game, although some guys call it a fading game, because the guys bet against each other rather than against the bank, or house. It is just the same kind of game as when two guys get together and start shooting craps against each other, and Nathan Detroit does not have to bother with a regular crap table and a layout such as they have in gambling houses.

In fact, about all Nathan Detroit has to do with the game is to find a spot, furnish the dice and take his percentage, which is by no means bad.

In such a game as this there is no real action until a guy is out on a point, and then the guys around commence to bet he makes this point, or that he does not make this point, and the odds in any country in the world that a guy does not make a ten with a pair of dice before he rolls seven, is 2 to 1.

Well, when Charley says he rolls ten in the derby hat nobody opens their trap, and Charley looks all around the table, and all of a sudden he sees Jew Louie at one end, although Jew Louie seems to be trying to shrink himself up when Charley's eyes light on him.

"I will take the odds for five C's", Charley says, "and Louie, you get it"—meaning he is letting Louie bet him \$1,000 to \$500 that he does not make his ten.

Now Jew Louie is a small operator at all times and more of a Shylock than he is a player, and the only reason he is up there against the table at all at this moment is because he moves up to lend Nick the Greek some dough; and ordinarily there is no more chance of Jew Louie betting a thousand to five hundred on any proposition whatever than there is of him giving his dough to the Salvation Army, which is no chance at all. It is a sure thing he will never think of betting a thousand to five hundred a guy will not make ten with the dice, and when Rusty Charley tells Louie he has such a bet, Louie starts trembling all over.

The others around the table do not say a word, and so Charley rattles the dice again in his duke, blows on them, and chucks them into the derby hat and says "Hah!" But, of course, nobody can see in the derby hat except Charley, and he peeks in at the dice and says "Five". He rattles the dice once more and chucks them into the derby and says "Hah!" and then after peeking into the hat at the dice he says "Eight". I am commencing to sweat for fear he may heave a seven in the hat and blow his bet, and I know Charley has no five C's to pay

off with, although, of course, I also know Charley has no idea of paying off, no matter what he heaves.

On the next chuck, Charley yells "Money!"— meaning he finally makes his ten, although nobody sees it but him; and he reaches out his hand to Jew Louie, and Jew Louie hands him a big fat G note, very, very slow. In all my life I never see a sadder-looking guy than Louie when he is parting with his dough. If Louie has any idea of asking Charley to let him see the dice in the hat to make sure about the ten, he does not speak about the matter, and as Charley does not seem to wish to show the ten around, nobody else says anything either, probably figuring Rusty Charley isn't a guy who is apt to let anybody question his word, especially over such a small matter as a ten.

"Well", Charley says, putting Louie's G note in his pocket, "I think this is enough for me to-night", and he hands the derby hat back to the little guy who owns it and motions me to come on, which I am glad to do, as the silence in the joint is making my stomach go up and down inside me, and I know this is bad for my blood pressure. Nobody as much as opens his face from the time we go in until we start out, and you will be surprised how nervous it makes you to be in a big crowd with everybody dead still, especially when you figure it a spot that is liable to get hot any minute. It is only just as we got to the door that anybody speaks, and who is it but Jew Louie, who pipes up and says to Rusty Charley like this:

"Charley", he says, "do you make it the hard way?"

Well, everybody laughs, and we go on out, but I never hear myself whether Charley makes his ten with a six and a four, or with two fives—which is the hard way to make a ten with the dice—although I often wonder about the matter afterward.

I am hoping that I can now get away from Rusty Charley and go on home, because I can see he is the last guy in the world to have around a blood pressure, and, furthermore, that people may get the wrong idea of me if I stick around with him, but when I suggest going to Charley, he seems to be hurt.

"Why", Charley says, "you are a fine guy to be talking of quitting a pal just as we are starting out. You will certainly stay with me because I like company, and we will go down to Ikey the Pig's and play stuss. Ikey is an old friend of mine, and I owe him a complimentary play."

Now, of course, I do not wish to go to Ikey the Pig's, because it is a place away downtown, and I do not wish to play stuss, because this is a game which I am never able to figure out myself, and, furthermore, I remember Doc Brennan says I ought to get a little sleep now and then; but I see no use in hurting Charley's feelings, especially as he is apt to do something drastic to me if I do not go.

So he calls a taxi, and we start downtown for Ikey the Pig's, and the jockey who is driving the short goes so fast that it makes my blood pressure go up a foot to a foot and a half from the way I feel inside, although Rusty Charley pays no attention to the speed. Finally I stick my head out the window and ask the jockey to please take it a little easy, as I wish to get where I am going all in one piece, but the guy only keeps busting along.

We are at the corner of Nineteenth and Broadway when all of a sudden Rusty Charley yells at the jockey to pull up a minute, which the guy does. Then Charley steps out of the cab and says to the jockey like this:

"When a customer asks you to take it easy, why do you not be nice and take it easy? Now see what you get."

And Rusty Charley hauls off and clips the jockey a punch on the chin that knocks the poor guy right off the seat into the street, and then Charley climbs into the seat himself and away we go with Charley driving, leaving the guy stretched out as stiff as a board. Now Rusty Charley once drives a short for a living himself, until the coppers get an idea that he is not always delivering his customers to the right address, especially such as may happen to be drunk when he gets them, and he is a pretty fair driver, but he only looks one way, which is straight ahead.

Personally, I never wish to ride with Charley in a taxicab under any circumstances, especially if he is driving, because he certainly drives very fast. He pulls up a block from Ikey the Pig's, and says we will leave the short there until somebody finds it and turns it in, but just as we are walking away from the short up steps a copper in uniform and claims we cannot park the short in this spot without a driver.

Well, Rusty Charley just naturally hates to have coppers give him advice, so what he does he do but peek up and down the street to see if anybody is looking, and then haul off and clout the copper on the chin, knocking him bow-legged. I wish to say I never see a more accurate puncher than Rusty Charley because he always connects with that old button. As the copper tumbles, Rusty Charley grabs me by the arm and starts me running up a side street, and after we go about a block we dodge into Ikey the Pig's.

It is what is called a stuss house, and many prominent citizens of the neighbourhood are present playing stuts. Nobody seems any too glad to see Rusty Charley, although Ikey the Pig lets on he is tickled half to death. This Ikey the Pig is a short fat-necked guy who will look very natural at New Year's, undressed, and with an apple in his mouth, but it seems he and Rusty Charley are really old-time friends, and think fairly well of each other in spots.

But I can see that Ikey the Pig is not so tickled when he finds Charley is there to gamble, although Charley flashes his G note at once, and says he does not mind losing a little dough to Ikey just for old time's sake. But I judge Ikey the Pig knows he is never going to handle Charley's G note, because Charley puts it back in his pocket and it never comes out again even though Charley gets off loser playing stuss right away.

Well, at five o'clock in the morning, Charley is stuck one hundred and thirty G's, which is plenty of money even when a guy is playing on his muscle, and of course Ikey the Pig knows there is no chance of getting one hundred and thirty cents off Rusty Charley, let alone that many thousands. Everybody

else is gone by this time and Ikey wishes to close up. He is willing to take Charley's marker for a million if necessary to get Charley out, but the trouble is in stuss a guy is entitled to get back a percentage of what he loses, and Ikey figures Charley is sure to wish this percentage even if he gives a marker and the percentage will wreck Ikey's joint.

Furthermore, Rusty Charley says he will not quit loser under such circumstances because Ikey is his friend, so what happens but Ikey finally sends out and hires a cheater by the name of Dopey Goldberg, who takes to dealing the game, and in no time he has Rusty Charley even by cheating in Rusty Charley's favour.

Personally, I do not pay much attention to the play, but grab myself a few winks of sleep in a chair in a corner, and the rest seems to help my blood pressure no little. In fact, I am not noticing my blood pressure at all when Rusty Charley and I get out of Ikey the Pig's, because I figure Charley will let me go home and I can go to bed. But although it is six o'clock, and coming on broad daylight when we leave Ikey's, Charley is still full of zing, and nothing will do him but we must go to a joint that is called the Bohemian Club.

Well, this idea starts my blood pressure going again, because the Bohemian Club is nothing but a deadfall where guys and dolls go when there is positively no other place in town open, and it is run by a guy by the name of Knife O'Halloran, who comes from down around Greenwich Village and is considered a very bad character. It is well known to one and all that a guy is apt to lose his life in Knife O'Halloran's any night, even if he does nothing more than drink Knife O'Halloran's liquor.

But Rusty Charley insists on going there, so naturally I go with him; and at first everything is very quiet and peaceful, except that a lot of guys and dolls in evening clothes, who wind up there after being in the night clubs all night, are yelling in one corner of the joint. Rusty Charley and Knife O'Halloran are having a drink together out of a bottle which Knife carries in his pocket, so as not to get it mixed up with the liquor he

sells his customers, and are cutting up old touches of the time when they run with the Hudson Dusters together, when all of a sudden in comes four coppers in plain clothes.

Now these coppers are off duty and are meaning no harm to anybody, and are only wishing to have a dram or two before going home, and the chances are they will pay no attention to Rusty Charley if he minds his own business, although of course they know who he is very well indeed and will take great pleasure in putting the old sleeve on him if they only have a few charges against him, which they do not. So they do not give him a tumble. But if there is one thing Rusty Charley hates it is a copper, and he starts eyeing them from the minute they sit down at a table, and by and by I hear him say to Knife O'Halloran like this:

"Knife", Charley says, "what is the most beautiful sight in the world?"

"I do not know, Charley", Knife says. "What is the most beautiful sight in the world?"

"Four dead coppers in a row", Charley says.

Well, at this I personally ease myself over toward the door, because I never wish to have any trouble with coppers and especially with four coppers, so I do not see everything that comes off. All I see is Rusty Charley grabbing at the big foot which one of the coppers kicks at him, and then everybody seems to go into a huddle, and the guys and dolls in evening dress start squawking, and my blood pressure goes up to maybe a million.

I get outside the door, but I do not go away at once as anybody with any sense will do, but stand there listening to what is going on inside, which seems to be nothing more than a loud noise like ker-bump, ker-bump, ker-bump. I am not afraid there will be any shooting, because as far as Rusty Charley is concerned he is too smart to shoot any coppers, which is the worst thing a guy can do in this town, and the coppers are not likely to start any blasting because they will not wish it to come out that they are in a joint such as the Bohemian Club

off duty. So I figure they will all just take it out in pulling and hauling.

Finally the noise inside dies down, and by and by the door opens and out comes Rusty Charley, dusting himself off here and there with his hands and looking very much pleased indeed, and through the door before it flies shut again I catch a glimpse of a lot of guys stretched out on the floor. Furthermore, I can still hear guys and dolls hollering.

"Well, well", Rusty Charley says, "I am commencing to think you take the wind on me, and am just about to get mad at you, but here you are. Let us go away from this joint, because they are making so much noise inside you cannot hear yourself think. Let us go to my joint and make my old woman cook us up some breakfast, and then we can catch some sleep. A little ham and eggs will not be bad to take right now."

Well, naturally ham and eggs are appealing to me no little at this time, but I do not care to go to Rusty Charley's joint. As far as I am personally concerned, I have enough of Rusty Charley to do me a long, long time, and I do not care to enter into his home life to any extent whatever, although to tell the truth I am somewhat surprised to learn he has any such life. I believe I do once hear that Rusty Charley marries one of the neighbours' children, and that he lives somewhere over on Tenth Avenue in the Forties, but nobody really knows much about this, and everybody figures if it is true his wife must lead a terrible dog's life.

But while I do not wish to go to Charley's joint, I cannot very well refuse a civil invitation to eat ham and eggs, especially as Charley is looking at me in a very much surprised way because I do not seem so glad, and I can see that it is not everyone that he invites to his joint. So I thank him, and say there is nothing I will enjoy more than ham and eggs such as his old woman will cook for us, and by and by we are walking along Tenth Avenue up around Forty-fifth Street.

It is still fairly early in the morning, and business guys are opening up their joints for the day, and little children are

skipping along the sidewalks going to school and laughing tee-hee, and old dolls are shaking bedclothes and one thing and another out of the windows of the tenement houses, but when they spot Rusty Charley and me everybody becomes very quiet indeed, and I can see that Charley is greatly respected in his own neighbourhood. The business guys hurry into their joints, and the little children stop skipping and tee-heeing and go tip-toeing along, and the old dolls yank in their noodles, and a great quiet comes to the street. In fact, about all you can hear is the heels of Rusty Charley and me hitting on the sidewalk.

There is an ice wagon with a couple of horses hitched to it standing in front of a store, and when he sees the horses Rusty Charley seems to get a big idea. He stops and looks the horses over very carefully, although as far as I can see they are nothing but horses, and big and fat, and sleepy-looking horses at that. Finally Rusty Charley says to me like this:

"When I am a young guy", he says, "I am a very good puncher with my right hand, and often I hit a horse on the skull with my fist and knock it down. I wonder", he says, "if I lose my punch. The last copper I hit back there gets up twice on me."

Then he steps up to one of the ice-wagon horses and hauls off and biffs it right between the eyes with a right-hand smack that does not travel more than four inches, and down goes old Mister Horse to his knees looking very much surprised indeed. I see many a hard puncher in my day including Dempsey when he really can punch, but I never see a harder punch than Rusty Charley gives this horse.

Well, the ice-wagon driver comes busting out of the store all heated up over what happens to his horse, but he cools out the minute he sees Rusty Charley, and goes on back into the store leaving the horse still taking a count, while Rusty Charley and I keep walking. Finally we come to the entrance of a tenement house that Rusty Charley says is where he lives, and in front of this house is a wop with a push-cart loaded with fruit and

vegetables and one thing and another, which Rusty Charley tips over as we go into the house, leaving the wop yelling very loud, and maybe cussing us in wop for all I know. I am very glad, personally, we finally get somewhere, because I can feel that my blood pressure is getting worse every minute I am with Rusty Charley.

We climb two flights of stairs, and then Charley opens a door and we step into a room where there is a pretty little red-headed doll about knee high to a flivver, who looks as if she may get out of the hay, because her red hair is flying around every which way on her head, and her eyes seem still gummed up with sleep. At first I think she is a very cute sight indeed, and then I see something in her eyes that tells me this doll, whoever she is, is feeling very hostile to one and all.

"Hello, tootsie", Rusty Charley says. "How about some ham and eggs for me and my pal here? We are all tired out going around and about."

Well, the little red-headed doll just looks at him without saying a word. She is standing in the middle of the floor with one hand behind her, and all of a sudden she brings this hand around, and what does she have in it but a young baseball bat, such as kids play ball with, and which cost maybe two bits; and the next thing I know I hear something go ker-bap, and I can see she smacks Rusty Charley on the side of the noggin with the bat.

Naturally I am greatly horrified at this business, and figure Rusty Charley will kill her at once, and then I will be in a jam for witnessing the murder and will be held in jail several years like all witnesses to anything in this man's town; but Rusty Charley only falls into a big rocking-chair in a corner of the room and sits there with one hand to his head, saying, "Now hold on tootsie", and "Wait a minute there, honey". I recollect hearing him say, "We have company for breakfast", and then the little red-headed doll turns on me and gives me a look such as I will always remember, although I smile at her very pleasant and mention it is a nice morning.

Finally she says to me like this:

"So you are the trambo who keeps my husband out all night, are you, you trambo?" she says, and with this she starts for me, and I start for the door; and by this time my blood pressure is all out of whack, because I can see that Mrs. Rusty Charley is excited more than somewhat. I get my hand on the knob and just then something hits me alongside the noggin, which I afterward figure must be the baseball bat, although remember having a sneaking idea the roof caves in on me.

How I get the door open I do not know, because I am very dizzy in the head and my legs are wobbling, but when I think back over the situation I remember going down a lot of steps very fast, and by and by the fresh air strikes me, and I figure I am in the clear. But all of a sudden I feel another strange sensation back of my head and something goes plop against my noggin, and I figure at first that maybe my blood pressure runs up so high that it squirts out the top of my bean. Then I peek around over my shoulder just once to see that Mrs. Rusty Charley is standing beside the wop peddler's cart snatching fruit and vegetables of one kind and another off the cart and chucking them at me.

But what she hits me with back of the head is not an apple, or a peach, or a rutabaga, or a cabbage, or even a casaba melon, but a brickbat that the wop has on his cart to weight down the paper sacks in which he sells his goods. It is this brickbat which makes a lump on the back of my head so big that Doc Brennan thinks it is a tumour when I go to him the next day about my stomach, and I never tell him any different.

"But", Doc Brennan says, when he takes my blood pressure again, "your pressure is down below normal now, and as far as it is concerned you are in no danger whatever. It only goes to show what just a little bit of quiet living will do for a guy", Doc Brennan says. "Ten Bucks, please", he says.

—*More Than Somewhat*

PHYLLIS MCGINLEY

It would not be right to name Miss McGinley as Dorothy Parker's successor, for the redoubtable Mrs. Parker has, I am sure, many more deadly shafts of verse to loose. But Phyllis McGinley's poems have the same alternate satire and tendresse that we have come to expect from Dorothy Parker's. She writes regularly for American magazines, and has published a volume of verse, characteristically called A POCKETFUL OF WRY. Her work has not, I believe, previously appeared in this country.

ODE TO THE END OF SUMMER

Summer, adieu.

Adieu, gregarious season.

Goodbye, 'revoir, farewell.

Now day comes late; now chillier blows the breeze on
Forsaken beach and boarded-up hotel.

Now wild geese fly together in thin lines

And Tourist Homes take down their lettered signs.

It fades—this green, this lavish interval,

This time of flowers and fruits,

Of melon ripe along the orchard wall,

Of sun and sails and wrinkled linen suits;

Time when the world seems rather plus than minus

And pollen tickles the allergic sinus.

Now fugitives to farm and shore and highland

Cancel their brief escape.

The Ferris wheel is quiet at Coney Island

And quaintness trades no longer on the Cape;

While meek-eyed parents hasten down the ramps

To greet their offspring, terrible from camps.

Turn up the steam. The year is growing older.

The maple boughs are red.

Summer, farewell. Farewell the sunburnt shoulder,

Farewell the peasant kerchief on the head.

Farewell the thunderstorm, complete with lightning,

And the white shoe that ever needeth whitening.

Farewell vacation friendships, sweet but tenuous.

Ditto to slacks and shorts.

Farewell, O strange compulsion to be strenuous

Which sends us forth to death on tennis courts.
Farewell, Mosquito, horror of our nights;
Clambakes, iced tea, and transatlantic flights.

The zinnia withers, mortal as the tulip.
Now from the dripping glass
I'll sip no more the amateur mint julep
Nor dine al fresco on the alien grass;
Nor scale the height nor breast the truculent billow
Nor lay my head on any weekend pillow.

Unstintingly I yield myself to Autumn
And Equinoctial sloth.
I hide my swim suit in the bureau's bottom
Nor fear the fury of the after-moth.
Forswearing porch and pool and beetled garden,
My heart shall rest, my arteries shall harden.

Welcome, kind Fall, and every month with "r" in
Whereto my mind is bent.
Come, sedentary season that I star in,
O fire-lit Winter of my deep content!
Amid the snow, the sleet, the blizzard's raw gust,
I shall be cozier than I was in August.

*Safe from the picnic sleeps the unlittered dell.
The last Good Humour sounds its final bell,
And all is silence.*

Summer, farewell, farewell.

THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE

Summer is icumen in,
 Sound the sirens, light the torches,
Warn the roses to begin
 Climbing up suburban porches.
Let the laurel run like fire
 Over all the upland reaches
(But be wary of the wire,
 Barbed and bright, along the beaches).

Hark! The blithe, the morning bird,
 Early singing, stirs our slumber
Where the young man, und deferred,
 Waits upon his legal number.
Now the wren's unmortgaged nest
 Hugs our hospitable acre,
And the ski pole takes its rest
 With the rationed Studebaker.

Now the sails of summer fill,
 Now the waves are all a-glimmer,
Though attentive at his drill
 Stands the lean and sunburnt swimmer.
Now the lilies swoon with sun,
 Now the cricket pipes the shadows
(And the anti-aircraft gun
 Crouches in astonished meadows).

Here is June. So let the ice
 Tinkle in unsweetened glasses.
Fling the immemorial rice.
 Strew the picnic on the grasses.

Tell the chattering mind to hush
For one soft, deceptive hour
While the berry fires the bush
And the bee invades the flower,

Till in lupin-coloured light
Dusk dissolves, the stars are certain,
And the aromatic night
Leans against the blackout curtain.



LITTLE LULU

Marge's famous figure in the *Saturday Evening Post*

